Enduring Tough Times  
August 30-31, 2012

I. WELCOME, 15 mins.
Plan one to two icebreakers for the purpose of mixing around and getting group participation or getting acquainted.

II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.
Prayerfully choose a few songs to lead people into God’s presence. During this time, cell leaders will encourage cell members to listen to the Holy Spirit and release the words of strengthening, encouragement, and comfort they have received for the cell group, the church and nations. Upon each word shared, the cell leader will lead members by thanking and praising God for His promise and/or praying aloud together for the needs, etc.

During this time, the cell leader will also lead the group to pray aloud for: (1) the mission organization or daughter church that the cell group adopts (2) the church ministry needs (3) blessings for new comers, the sick.

MISSION ORGANIZATION: __________________, their needs: ________________
(Please contact the church if you don’t know the needs of the mission organization.)

CHURCH MINISTRY:
1. Equipping Class: Power of prayer @ 1pm every Sunday, room G5
2. Intern Cell Leader Training: 9/15 @ 9:30am, room G10
3. Leader’s Retreat: 10/12-13
4. Mission Conference: 10/19-21, Cindy Jacob

III. WORD, 45 mins.
A. Sharing from last Sunday’s message.
   1. What is the main message from last Sunday sermon? What did God say to you from the message?
   2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?

B. Discussion Topic: “Enduring Tough Times”

   Scriptures: John 16:33, Psalm 34:19, Psalm 119:92, James 1:2-4, Romans 5:3-4, 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

   Memory Verse: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

   “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”  
   John 16:33

   The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all.  
   Psalm 34:19

   Jesus did not promise a trouble-free life for His followers. On the contrary, He promised that in this world we would always have troubles, trials, and persecution. The question most people ask during tough times is: “Why me?” This is the wrong question to ask. We should be asking: “How can I respond in a way that honors God?” Following are five steps to not only endure tough times, but to glorify God in the midst of them.

1. Read God’s Word.
   If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.  
   Psalm 119:92
   - Many suffer spiritual shipwreck during tough times.

   Questions
   - What kept David from perishing during his affliction?
   - How does God’s Word help us to endure tough times?

2. Respond with joy.
   Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.  
   James 1:2-4
   - Joy in the midst of a trial seems like an impossible order. If we understand the end result of a trial, then we might be able to respond with joy.

   Question
   - What does the testing of our faith produce?
   - What is the finished work of perseverance?
3. **Receive trials as character builders.**
   Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.
   Romans 5:3-4

   - One goal of the Christian life is to become more Christ-like in our character.
   
   **Question**
   - How is character produced?
   - How do trials help build our character?

4. **Realize trials are only temporary.**
   For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
   2 Corinthians 4:17-18

   - Tough times seem to last forever while we are going through them, but in reality they are only temporary.
   
   **Question**
   - While going through tough times, what should our eyes be fixed on?
   - How can we focus on the unseen?

5. **Reach out to others who are experiencing tough times.**
   Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
   2 Corinthians 1:3-4

   - Our God is the “Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.”
   
   **Question**
   - How has He comforted you in tough times?
   - How have you reached out to people in their tough times?

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**Personal Application**

**Questions**
1. Are you presently experiencing tough times? Describe your situation.
2. What areas of your character is God currently developing? How can you become more Christ-like in these specific areas?
3. Do you know anyone who is experiencing tough times? How can you help them?