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: How to Improve Your Relationship - room G10, Beginning in Christ - room E4, @ 1:45pm every Sunday
2. Intern Cell Leader Training: 9/22 @ 9:30am-4:30pm, room G10
3. Leader’s Retreat: 10/10-12
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: “Withstanding Persecution”
Memory Verse: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:35, 37)

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”
Matthew 5:44

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.”
Romans 12:14

Are we really expected to love our enemies? This command may seem impossible, but if we understand what the Bible says about persecution, we will not only be able to withstand persecution, we may even be able to obey Jesus’ command to bless and pray for our persecutors. Just what does the Bible say about persecution?

1. Persecution is part of the package.
“Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”
John 15:20

Questions
- Who persecuted Jesus?
- Why did they persecute him?

2. Persecution does not mean God has abandoned us.
...persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed”
2 Corinthians 4:9

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
Romans 8:35, 37

Question
- How can we know God has not abandoned us?
3. Even people with great faith receive persecution.

They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated – the world was not worthy of them... These were all commended for their faith....

Hebrews 11:37-39

- Great faith enables us to endure, not avoid persecution.

Question
- Why is it important to keep our faith in God in the midst of persecution?

4. Persecution comes because of the Word.

“But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.”

Mark 4:17

Question
- Why does the Word attract persecution?

5. Persecution will be rewarded in heaven.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Matthew 5:10-12

Question
- How can we be expected to rejoice when we are persecuted?

Personal Application

Questions
1. Are you being persecuted because of Christ? How are you responding? (Use the prayer time to pray for those who persecute you.)
2. Have you forgiven all of your past and present persecutors? Have you reacted to persecution in a way that honors God or dishonors God?
3. Do you ever feel that God has abandoned you? When? Why?