I. WELCOME, 15 mins.
   Plan one to two icebreakers for the purpose of mixing around and raising 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 and 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’s 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: “Be a faithful steward of God’s household”

   Scriptures: 1Timothy 1:1-11

   Memory Verse: The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (1 Timothy 1:5 NIV)

Introduction:

   The books of 1st and 2nd Timothy along with Titus are known as Pastoral Epistles. Paul wrote the letters addressed to two young pastors in Ephesus and Crete regarding the ministry and teachings of the fledgling churches. Even with the elapse of nearly two millennia, the church today still holds onto the same principles Paul has set up for the early church. For no matter how this world evolves, the church remains Christ’s body and bride forever. Paul’s Epistles have unfolded a blueprint for building God’s glorious church.

   After Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome, he came to Ephesus. But soon, he found that the church was under the savage attack of heresy. In order to continue his journey to other churches, he had no choice but to leave Timothy there for the follow-up of his work to sustain and strengthen the believers. However his desire to go back to them soon (1Tim3:14) was met with disappointment. Paul then wrote Timothy these instructions as the guidelines of conduct to follow in God’s household (1Tim 3:15).

   The instructions have been apparently prepared by God for you and me even to date. For it is God’s will that together we build up a church to glorify Him by becoming faithful stewards. Today’s material covers 1Tim 1:1-11.

I. Opening greetings and blessings (1Tim 1:1-2)

   1. **Proclaiming Paul’s identity/status (1Tim 1:1):** Being saved by the Lord Jesus, Paul has become an apostle whose life is dedicated to the Lord. For in Christ there is hope for eternity.

   2. **Clarifying Paul’s spiritual relationship with Timothy (1Tim 1:2a):** The relationship has surpassed that of flesh and blood. It has entered the realm of spiritual mentorship.

   3. **Paul’s blessings (1Tim1:2b):** Blessing gets its root in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who serve the Lord need to constantly receive His grace, mercy and peace.

II. A faithful steward need to stay in the Truth (1Tim 1:3-7)

   1. **No false doctrines or heresy (1Tim 1:3):** A steward has to stand firm in path of the truth, and meanwhile welcoming the guiding work of the Holy Spirit into God’s all truth (John 16:13). Any teaching against the Truth is not allowed.
2. **No myths or pointless talks (1Tim 1:4):** Dedicate to the understanding of God’s truth instead of making up things, wandering away or turning into meaningless talk. The endless arguments divide the church instead of building it up. Either old practices or notions no longer found suitable at present (genealogies) should be emphasized. The church needs to be renewed by God’s guidance as He removed Moses’ veil in the old days.

3. **Do not teach without a thorough understanding (1Tim 1:7):** Being a teacher of God’s words doesn’t mean one can speak as he wishes just for the sake of earning respect from others. Such a person acts as a blind person leading another blind, and both end up at falling into a pit (Matthews 15:14). Yet such person will be judged even more strictly (James 3:1).

4. **Speak out of God's love in facing people who make meaningless speech (1Tim 1:5-6):** Paul’s advice for Timothy is “The goal of this command is love”. When people astray from the path, it is necessary to bring them back for the sake of love. But where does the love come from:
   a. **from a pure heart:** A right motivation aims at looking for the lost and bringing them back gently. The person must be embraced by God’s love and won’t feel discouraged and gets cold when encountering difficulties.
   b. **from a good conscience:** No fear comes out from a good conscience, because “If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God.” (1 John 3:21).
   c. **from a sincere faith:** The best weapon is a sincere faith, which stays focused on God and relies on Him. A sincere faith doesn’t seek quarrels or arguments.

III. Faithful stewards must learn the Law and its purpose (1Tim 1:8-11):

1. **The law must be applied properly (1Tim 1:8):** God’s word is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good (Romans 7:12) It is important to use it properly for it means well for different circumstances.

2. **The law serves as a mirror (1Tim 1:9-10):** The law works to condemn the sinful humanity. Before its existence, there was no awareness of sins. After looking into the mirror, one sees the reflection of his guilt.
   a) The lawbreakers and rebels: Those who choose not to obey the law or to act according to the sinful nature fall into this category. Such people are easily tempted by Satan and go astray from the right way.
   b) The ungodly and the sinful: Godly people always hold God in reverent position and piously follow His words. The ungodly follow the world patterns. They have sinned against God and are doomed to fall.
   c) The unholy and irreligious: The unholy covet the world. There is no place for God’s words in their hearts. They are get trapped and stumble.
   d) Those parricides and murders: Both have committed very serious crimes. Such felony results in the resentment hoarding in heart and bursts out in evil. It is a pity that the most treasured human relation as parents/children can turn so wrong and end in such tragedy.
   e) Adulterers and perverts: The later refers to the homosexuals. Both are found detestable in God’s eyes.
   f) Slave traders, liars and perjurers: All these are connected to lying or cheating. The Scripture condemns anything out of falsehood. Verses in Revelation 21:8 indicate that the fate of all liars will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.
Anyone against sound doctrine: God’s final judgment will bring justice to punish any wrongdoer who doesn’t act according to His rules of goodness.

3. **Christ is the end of the law (Romans 10:4):** Through the law we become conscious of sin. However the law doesn’t eradicate the sinfulness of humanity. Only by the power of Jesus’ blood we can be cleansed and restored. Christ himself is the glorious gospel.

**Discussions:**

1. List the characteristics that make a spiritual father. What kinds of blessing can he give to others?
2. Explain what is a pure heart, a good conscience or a sincere faith?
3. What are the things Paul’s warns Timothy to guard against in church? Why do they matter?
4. How does one become a faithful steward in God’s household?
5. Explain, “The goal of the law is love”. Does the command carry any meaning to you? Illustrate it by giving an example?
6. What is the value of the law? How do we apply it properly?

**Prayers:**

Dear Lord, We thank you and praise you, for you are the glorious gospel and you desire to bless all with your grace. Not only have you saved us from the bondage of sins, but also you have entrusted us with your words, so that we can become faithful stewards of your glorious church. We pray that once and again you fill us up with your immeasurable, unfailing love to help us live out your command: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” May we love those people surrounding us with the same kind of love of yours. We say this in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen!

**IV. WORK (Pray for each other), 10 mins.**

Please break into group of 2 or 3 to pray for each other’s needs.