Lesson 4 - Bearing Testimonies in Church
Nov. 1-2, 2012

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

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 (4) blessings for the sick.

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

Prayer Requests for CHURCH MINISTRY:
1. Cell Group Booth: 11/4, please pray that people would check out the booth and join the cell group.
2. Presidential Election: 11/6, please pray for America and the election. Pray that God will transform the church with the renewed minds and the church will become a true prophetic voice for the nation.
3. Ministry Coworker Recruiting Day: 11/11, please pray that people will join to serve and grow through serving
4. Christmas Party: 12/17 (Sat), please pray that new friends will come to the party and cell groups will have a successful outreach through celebrating the birth of Jesus.

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: Bearing testimonies in church

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**Scriptures:** 1Timothy 2:8-15 (Please read Bible verses in turns)

**Memorizing Verse:** I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. (1 Timothy 2:8 NIV)

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Foreword: Paul just finished emphasizing the importance of prayers for everyone and for all authorities. He then moved on to tell Timothy to urge all men and women in church to conduct themselves with propriety in order to bear testimonies that glorify God. The teaching still remains valid to the church up to date. Please read the content carefully and then put into practice.

I. Testimonies to be observed from brothers (1Tim 2:8):
1. Lift up holy hands in prayer everywhere: Men are leaders at church as well as in family. Their prayers in public places serve good examples for everyone.
2. Three principles for acceptable prayers:
   a. **Be holy:** For the Lord said: “When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen.” (Isaiah 1:15) He does not listen to the prayers from unholy hands.
   b. **Without anger:** He listens to an angry person, for “Man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.” (James 1:20). What anger does is do to ruin the harmonic interpersonal relationship, which results in unacceptable prayers. (Matthews 6:14-15)
   c. **Without disputing:** An open heart willing to accept other opinions is a good explanation. It can also mean humbly giving up one’s viewpoints. “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.” (1 Cor. 3:20) It can be further translated into “no doubting,” as stated in James 1:6-7 that a doubting man will not receive anything from the Lord.

II. Testimonies to be observed from sisters (1Tim 2:9-14)
1. **Dress modestly** *(1 Tim 2:9)*: Paul gave this caution for the women at that time who adorned themselves excessively, to the extent that it became a competition in outward beauty among them, rather than coming to church with a prayerful heart. Decency means low profile or “invisibility”, the attitude of avoiding attracting others’ attention when focusing on praying before God. Propriety means good self-restraint or a correct attitude when making one’s appearance in church.

2. **With good deeds** *(1 Tim 2:10)*: A God-fearing sister does not just pray with right attitude, her outward behaviors reflect her religious piety.

3. **Historical background**: Women at that time were considered lower in social status, and most of them received little education. They were easily tempted by the trend of the time and did as their hearts desired. Those sisters in the church did not know they should exercise self-restraint. They made improper speech in public and affect the congregation. Paul therefore felt obligated to remind them of the rules and orders from the Lord they should follow when the church met.

4. **Stay in quietness and full submission** *(1 Tim 2:11)*: Women were required to be silent instead of being talkative or eloquent, let alone make noises or be boisterous. In fact, this rule should be applied equally to everyone.

5. **Respect authority and order** *(1 Tim 2:12)*: Paul prevented women from teaching or having authority over men at church. However, he did not stop women from praying or giving sermons. *(1 Cor. 11:5)* What he wanted of women is to respect the authority at church and follow its order.

6. **God’s perspective** *(1 Tim 2:13-14)*:
   a. In the order of the Creation: Man first, then woman. God created men as leaders. However, both genders are equal in His eyes.
   b. In the order of the Fall: Woman first, then man. But it does not suggest that women are more likely to get tempted. It only points out in God’s household; women’s role should be a follower and a helper.

III. **Testimonies sisters should have in life** *(1 Tim 2:15)*:

As long as sisters continue in their faith, love and holiness with propriety, surely they will make a good spiritual impact to the next generation. This not only saves them, but also helps bring up godly offspring. Timothy becoming such a devout Christian results from the faith of his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice. *(2 Tim 1:5, Acts 16:1)* What a wonderful testimony both women have shown!

**Discussion Questions:**

1. **What have you learned from the teachings today regarding to prayers?**
2. **What is the role men play at church and at home? What about women? Why has God made such an arrangement?**
3. **How do we conduct ourselves in speech, behaviors and appearance in order to demonstrate a new life in Christ?**
4. **Why does God put such an emphasis on authority and order in church? After today’s study, what do you think we should do to follow these instructions?**
5. **Share with others the growth of your spiritual life! Proclaim God’s word** *(1 Tim 2:8)* **led by the leader. Please come to the cell meet next week and check if more testimonies are seen at church! A reminder for coming to the cell meeting regularly.**

**Prayer:**

Dear Lord, We thank you and give you our praises. We know you have set your heart on your church, a place to testify your glorious name. You long to see that in your household, everyone leads a life that bears testimony for you. May we become
more and more godly, respectful, and supportive to one another and grow in love. 
May we understand your heart and live out an abundant life. Let your church bear 
the testimony of your holy Presence. Thank you for listening to our prayers. In your 
name we pray! Amen!

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

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