Lesson 10 - Honor God’s Servants
February 7-8, 2013

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:
1/13-3/17: Sunday Equipping Class – Supernatural Living @ 1:45-3:15pm
2/14: Single’s Valentine Party
March: Holy Spirit month
3/1-3/2: Holy Spirit Conference
3/23: Financial Management Seminar

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: Honor God’s Servants

Scriptures: 1 Timothy 5:17-25 (Please read Bible verses in turns)
Verse to memorize: For Scripture says, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.”

(1 Timothy 5:18 NIV)

Foreword: Paul founded the Ephesian church and sent Timothy over to manage and pastor that church on his behalf as a coworker. Timothy had the authority to choose and ordain elders to manage the church. Elders of a church in the NT era are spiritual leaders that are highly respectable and enjoy great reputation. They are also called the overseers, carrying the duty of to nurture, manage, oversee, protect and teach people in God’s family (1 Timothy 3:1-7). At that time, a church would assign elders to different duties by their gifts. Some of the elders would quit their secular jobs and become full-time ministers. Here, Paul told Timothy how to manage the church, how to treat those hard-working ministers, and how to handle sins of a leader and accusation against him. Paul was also concerned about Timothy’s health and told him to use a little wine because of his stomach.

1. How to treat ministers well (1 Timothy 5:17-18):
   1. Duties of a minister: (1 Timothy 5:17)
      (1) Church management: human resource, daily administration and fiscal management, as well as being a spiritual leader and a good example for believers.
      (2) Preaching and teaching: outreaching and preaching, as well as teaching and pastoring the church.
   2. Honoring a minister: (1 Timothy 5:17-18)
      (1) He is worthy: For Scripture says, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” (Deuteronomy 25:4), which means an ox should get fed while working. In other words, a minister receiving financial support from the gospel is consistent with the Biblical teachings (1 Corinthians 9:14).
      (2) He deserves: “The worker deserves his wages.” This is what Jesus said when he sent his disciples out to preach the gospel(Luke 10:7). In other words, a worker deserves reasonable wages (5:18)
      (3) Double honor: A minister working hard for the gospel deserves the honor by the believers. We need to have a God-fearing and sacrificing heart to give the wages he deserves to a God’s servant, and with “double” honor (5:17).

2. How to handle sins of a leader and accusation against him (1 Timothy 5:19-21)
   It is very easy for a church leader to be hated and accused by others. However, when a church leader sins, the church may suffer a great damage. Many people may stumble if those sins are not handled properly. Paul told Timothy to handle those sins carefully without any partiality or favoritism and to rebuke publicly those who sinned.
1. Entertain only an accusation with evidence and witnesses: Do not entertain an accusation unless it is brought by two or three witnesses, in pursuance to Jewish legal principle (Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15-20). Therefore, do not casually handle any accusation against church leaders. Do not entertain it unless it is brought by two or three witnesses with true evidence (5:19).

2. With no partiality or favoritism: Entertain an accusation justly with no partiality or favoritism. Make a judgment and handle it by following the teachings of Jesus and his disciples. (5:21)

3. Rebuke publicly those who have sinned: If a leader is found to have indeed sinned, rebuke him publicly without any under-the-table deal, so as to avoid any suspicion or doubt, and to warn believers to fear God (5:20).

3. Principle to ordain a spiritual leader in the church: (1 Timothy 5:22, 24-25)

   Laying on of hands is a ritual to ordain or appoint a spiritual leader (a pastor, a minister, a zone pastor, or a cell group leader), and to send out a missionary in the church. It stands for acceptance, approval and assignment. It is a very solemn appointment.

   1. Be cautious and do not be hasty: Paul specifically told Timothy to be cautious and not be hasty in appointing church leaders. Elders and deacons shall be appointed by the principles in 1 Timothy 3 (5:22a).

   2. Keep oneself pure, never overlook and tolerate sins: Never overlook a leader’s flaw in his integrity, for the church may suffer a great damage by a leader’s minor transgressions or sins and his tolerance or compromise to sins (5:22b).

   3. Those that are hidden will be exposed in God’s final judgment: Even if something is overlooked in handling the accusation, or some sins are hidden, God looks into our hearts. In the judgment, everything will be exposed and answered for, whether it being good deed or sin (5:24-25).

4. A pastor needs to take care of his health (1 Timothy 5:23)

   Paul encouraged Timothy to take care of his health and not to neglect his illness due to some restrictions. Using a little wine was good for his stomach. Our body is God’s temple. As a servant of God, a pastor needs to have good health to better serve God in His kingdom. Believers need to always intercede for the physical and spiritual health of their pastors so that they can have enough physical and spiritual strength to serve God.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think is the main duty of a spiritual leader in the church? How did Paul teach us regard that?

2. Why is a spiritual leader worthy of double honor? What is your opinion towards “a preacher deserves double honor”?

3. How would the church handle it if a church leader or a believer sinned? How would you win him back?

4. Why does it take caution in appointing spiritual leaders? What takes caution in the process?

5. How can a spiritual leader stand for truth in his integrity? How can we help him?

6. Have you ever prayed for our pastors? Please share how to intercede for their physical and spiritual health.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, we thank you and we praise you! You give our church so many faithful pastors and coworkers. Please reward them doubly for their hard work. May they be worry-free when serving You, so that they can offer themselves to you with heart and soul. Please encourage us to love our pastors and always intercede for them. Please keep their integrity, keep them from temptations and deliver them from the evil one. Always keep them pure and holy in their ministries, so that they can be just without any partiality, favoritism or any tolerance towards sin. Make our church a holy and glorious church. Thank you for listening to our prayer, in Jesus’ great name. Amen!!

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

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