John Series XXI
Serve with a heart that loves the Lord
June 12, 2015

I. WELCOME, 15 mins.
Prepare a couple of simple, fun and delightful icebreakers to help your group warm up. Help your cell group members to lay aside their busyness and tiredness and prepare their hearts to come before God.

II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.
Prayerfully choose a few songs to lead the cell group members to worship God. The worship leader would encourage members to come before the throne of God to seek God’s face, and lead them into God’s presence. During this time, the cell group leader will also lead the group to pray aloud for the following prayer items:

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

B. CHURCH MINISTRY:
- 5/31 & 6/14 Baptism Class
- 6/7 English Leaders Meeting @ 1pm
- 6/14 English Family Luncheon
- 6/21 Baptism Service @ 3:30pm
- 6/21 Fathers Day

C. Newcomer: _______________. Confirm newcomers’ names before the meeting.
For sick members, friends or relatives: _______________. Please discuss how you may show you care for them.

III. WORD, 45 mins. Through sharing and discussing God’s word, the group applies it to their daily life.

A. Sharing the message from last Sunday’s sermon: (It would be helpful if you could listen online once again)

1. What is the key message from last Sunday’s sermon? How did God speak to you through the message?
2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?

B. Topic of the week: Serve with a heart that loves the Lord

Verses: John 21:15-23
Memorizing Verses: When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed My lambs.” (John 21:15)

Preface:
The last chapter of John records the event of the disciples fishing by the Sea of Galilee. This event is very similar to the first calling of Jesus to the disciples. That time, the Lord called the disciples to be fishers of men (Luke 5:4-11). This time it is to strengthen the disciples’ calling to be fishers of men and for them to learn the secret of being fishers of men, which is to obey the Word of the Lord. The Lord asked them to throw the net on the right side and they threw it on the right side and caught a large number of fish (John 21:6). The Lord also remembered their hard labor and prepared for them the burning charcoal and the fish and bread that was being cooked. (John 21:9-13). Thus, Jesus personally became their timely help.

The Lord gave a call of deep love to the weak and defeated Peter, so that Peter could stand back up by depending on the Lord and be restored in faith to serve the Lord, once again. This is a great encouragement for all of us who are the Lord’s disciples. Only the Lord’s love can make us stand back up again from our weaknesses. The Lord also gave the sheep He loved, to the people He loved. For those who had been touched by the Lord’s love, they will surely serve the Lord, all of their lives, with a heart that loves the Lord.

1. Those who serve the Lord must experience the grace of the Lord (John 21:15):
Peter truly loved the Lord from his feelings and natural will. Otherwise, Peter would not have risked his life to walk into the courtyard of the high priest, and he would not have run alongside John to the tomb of the Lord. Even more, he would not have heard John say, “It is the Lord!” and immediately jumped into the water to swim towards Jesus. However, the shadow of denying the Lord three times made Peter feel he was not worthy to come before the Lord to serve Him. The Lord, still showed Himself especially to the defeated and weak Peter, so that Peter could stand back up in
order to serve Him. The risen Lord cares for all of the disciples. He personally prepared the breakfast for them because He knew they had fished all night and must be very hungry, thirsty and cold. The Lord remembers their hard work and became their provider. Even more, the Lord wants these weak ones who serve Him to be renewed in strength. The Lord cared for their needs and personally prepared for the disciples the meal of fish and bread to enjoy. The Lord knows the needs of all those who serve Him and will surely provide sufficient grace to those who serve.

2. Those who serve the Lord must love the Lord (John 21:15-17)
   a. The Lord wants those who love Him to rise up to serve Him: The Lord especially asked Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” And Peter also answered three times, “I love you.” The first two times, the Lord used “love apapao”, which is the high and holy love of God. In the third time, he used the friendship love or the feeling love. In his answers three times, Peter used the feeling “love phileo”. Peter had denied the Lord three times and thought he was not qualified to love the Lord. Yet, Peter never thought that the Lord would repeatedly ask him to love Him with the high and holy love of God. That’s why, when the Lord asked Peter the third time - Are you only able to use the feeling love to love me? Jesus was also saying - Are you not able to love Me with a deeper love? Then Peter was sad and said to the Lord – You know all things, that I am so unqualified to love You. The Lord wants a person who loves Him with their whole heart to serve Him. Because only a person with a heart that completely loves the Lord can lay aside himself, to faithfully follow the Lord’s calling and commission in his whole life.

   b. The Lord entrusts His most beloved sheep to the care of those who love Him with their whole heart: Peter felt he was such a failure and not worthy of the Lord’s love. Yet the Lord, after each time he answered, gave His most beloved sheep to Peter to shepherd. The Lord knew that Peter loved Him with a true love. Even though Peter had once betrayed the Lord, Peter can once again turn around and come back to the Lord. Therefore, the Lord used something real to entrust to Peter and tell Peter – You don’t need to beat yourself up, even though you had failed once, the Lord has not given up on you. The Lord still wants to use you. You only need to love the Lord and rise up to serve the Lord as before!

3. Those who serve the Lord need to closely follow the Lord (John 21:18-23)
   a. Serve the Lord for their whole life (21:18-19): The Lord clearly told Peter - When your spiritual life was still shallow, you served by your own will. But as your spiritual life becomes more and more mature, your service will not be based on your own interest, but will be based completely according to the Lord’s will. The Lord not only wants to use you now, but wants to use you for your whole life.

   b. Be single-minded in following the Lord: People always want to compare themselves with others, even Peter was like this. The Lord told him that he would be martyred for the Lord. Peter saw John and was curious. What would the end of John’s life be like? Actually, the Lord leads everyone, differently. Therefore, when serving, do not look at other people and do not compare yourself with other people. You only need to firmly believe in the Lord, single-mindedly follow the Lord, focus and concentrate on Him. Serve the Lord faithfully your whole life, and you will surely be rewarded by Him.

Discussion (please choose the topic according to the needs):
1. What is “love” to you? In what ways do you express your love? In what ways do you like others to express their love to you?
2. Why did the risen Lord repeatedly ask Peter, “Do you love Me?” What is the relationship between loving the Lord and serving the Lord?
3. Why would Jesus entrust His beloved sheep to Peter, who once denied Him three times? From the Lord Jesus’ action, what conclusion can you reach in order to encourage and help your brothers and sisters in Christ to stand back up to serve?
4. From today’s passage, what keys have you learned about serving?
5. How can you encourage brothers and sisters to serve? In which ministry do you most want to participate? What act of service can
the whole cell group participate in?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we thank You and praise You, because Your love for us is so unchanging. You never forsake us. Even though we are like Peter, who once left You and sinned against You, You still love us and give us the chance to turn back. And You want us to serve You once more. O Lord! Thank You for Your grace and love. Please help us to think of Your love and grace every moment, so that our hearts will have the faith and power to single-mindedly follow You, and to rejoice in serving You. We thank You and pray in the precious name of the Lord Jesus, Amen!

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

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