Colossians Series 8
Be devoted in prayer, appreciate the coworkers
October 2, 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:
- 9/13-12/13 Experiencing God: Equipping Class @ 11:30am
- 10/14 Bi-Weekly Prayer Meeting @ 7:30pm in Fellowship Hall
- 10/17 Mission Talent Benefit Show for missionaries and daughter churches.
- 10/23-24 Leader’s Annual Planning Retreat
- 10/28 Bi-Weekly Prayer Meeting @ 7:30pm in Fellowship Hall
- 10/31 Hallelujah Party

C. New comer: ________________ Confirm new comers’ name before the meeting.
For sick members, friends or relatives: ________________ Please discuss how you may show your care to 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 on-line 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: Be devoted in prayer, appreciate the coworkers

| Verses: | Colossians 4:2-18 |
| Memorizing Verses: | Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. (Colossians 4:2) |

Preface:
After the apostle Paul taught us to live a life pleasing to the Lord, next, he teaches us to remain in the Lord and be connected with the Lord, and to devote ourselves in prayer. He wants us to pray for the gospel ministers that God may open a door for their message. Each of us also needs to be prepared at all times to make the most of every opportunity from God to share the gospel with people around us.

1. We need to be devoted in prayer (Colossians 4:2-4)
   a. Be devoted in prayer, connected with the Lord (vs. 2): Paul starts out the book by praying for the church and the believers. Now, he encourages us to pray together with him. If we want to live a life pleasing to God, we need to face our own weaknesses, and attacks from the enemy which hinder us from continuing to live out Christian values and characteristics. Therefore, we need to humbly depend on the Lord, devote ourselves in prayer, and ask God to give us strength so we can live for Him. We also need to remind ourselves not to be lead astray by heresies and harmful teachings, but to be intimately connected to the Lord, to discern God’s pure, perfect and good will, and to obey the teachings of God’s Word. Also, we should remember to always thank God for everything He does, to delight in coming before God.
   b. Pray for the messengers of the gospel (vs. 3-4): Even though Paul is an apostle who has been on 3 missionary journeys and has co-worked with God to plant many churches, yet he still asks the church to pray their gospel work, and for the Lord to open doors for the gospel to be preached. He asks them to pray for themselves to have speaking abilities, and to boldly and clearly proclaim the truth of the gospel (Ephesians 6:20), so that people can understand the mysteries of Christ. This helps us to learn that not only should we give to missions work, but even more we need to pray for missionaries. We should ask God to provide opportunities for them to share the gospel. Also anoint their tongues to clearly communicate the gospel so
people can understand the truth that Christ died for our sins to be forgiven, and his resurrection destroyed the power of hades and death so that we can receive a new life, to become the children of God.

2. We need to be wise in the way we act toward outsiders (Colossians 4:5-6)
   a. Make every opportunity to share the gospel (vs. 5a): God gives us life so we can have more abundance, so we can carry forth the mission of the gospel, proclaiming and testifying Jesus to the ends of the earth. Therefore, we should not waste the opportunities God gives to us to share the gospel. We need to be proactive in making the most of every opportunity to testify for the Lord, to spread widely the good news of God’s salvation.
   b. The attitude when speaking with outsiders (vs. 6): We are all witnesses for the Lord Jesus. When we talk with outsiders (unbelievers), we should not let people misunderstand the gospel, but wisely lead people to know God. Also, we should not use debate or criticism to share the gospel, but use words filled with grace, so that people’s hearts may be softened and more able to receive the gospel. We should also use words seasoned with salt, speaking words that comfort and build up people, in accordance with the truth, and lead people to repent, receive Jesus as their Savior, and receive the true peace. We need to always be prepared to be witnesses for the Lord to share the gospel with others.

3. We need to treasure and appreciate our coworkers (Colossians 4:7-18)
   a. Coworker team: Paul used 11 verses to frankly and warmly talk about his coworkers. He lets us know that the apostle Paul is not a lone ranger on the mission field, but he has a coworker team who support each other as they work hard in the work the Lord has entrusted to them - to share the gospel with the Gentiles. Other than the church partnering with Paul, he also has coworkers with him in prison: Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Epaphrus, doctor Luke, and Demas.
   b. Understanding the coworkers: Paul empathizes and understands his coworkers with his heart. To the Colossian church that is concerned about him, he especially sends Tychicus and the Colossian Onesimus to explain to them his situation and to comfort them. Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus are circumcised Jews who were spreading the gospel with Paul in prison. Paul especially did not want the church to take offense at Mark who had once left the missionary team, but he wants the church to receive Mark. He wants the Colossian church to understand the current status of Epaphrus, whom they had sent out, so that they can be reassured. He also warns the church member Archippus to be faithful in the work the Lord has entrusted to him.
   c. Appreciate the coworkers: Paul did not hold back in appreciating the coworkers. Tychicus was faithful in his ministry and is a Lord’s servant we can imitate. Onesimus, Mark, and Justus all endured the hardships of prison to be companions with Paul in advancing the gospel, so Paul’s heart was comforted. Epaphrus offered himself up in prayer for the Colossian church and worked hard for the brothers and sisters in Laodicea and Hierapolis. These are testimonies Paul can vouch for them.

Discussion (please choose the topic according to the needs of the members):
1. Who do you most want to pray for (other than yourself)? Why?
2. What is the relationship between being devoted and watchful in prayer and living a life pleasing to the Lord? What things do Paul want the church to pray for him? In what areas do this remind us to pray for our own church pastors, daughter church pastors and missionaries? (Please promptly pray for them)
3. How can we prepare ourselves to use wise and proper attitudes to respond to questions from our gospel friends?
4. In all the coworkers whom Paul appreciated, which one do you appreciate the most? Please explain.
5. Please publicly thank and concretely appreciate the cell group coworkers.
Prayer:

Dear Abba Father in heaven, we thank You for teaching us to live a life connected with You. With a grateful heart, we continue to come before You to seek Your kingdom, so that Your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. O Lord! May You grant us wisdom when interacting with others, so that we can become the witnesses for the gospel and lead people to come to You. We also pray for You to help us be connected with the coworkers, to understand and appreciate them, and to encourage and comfort each other as we walk this heavenly journey together. We thank You and pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, Amen!

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

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