
Ignite

“Holy Spirit, our teacher, as we dive into the Bible we ask You to awaken our hearts, expand our minds and shape our identities today. Amen”



SERMON SUMMARY

Note to Word Facilitator: The sermon notes below is a summary of the sermon. You may choose to further summarize it according to the needs and context of your CG members. The goal is not just to go through it “verbatim” but to prepare well, allowing members to recall and engage the message in the best possible way.

The Local Church 2: A Safe Spiritual Home

Senior Pastor Chris Kam

1 Peter 1:22-2:5, 9-10

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you. Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Introduction [Matthew 16:18](#), [Hebrews 10:25](#)

The word 'church' is translated from the word "ekklesia" which means an assembly of Christians. It also means the 'called out ones', or 'called together'. It is not a place or building; it is God's people so It is important to not give up meeting one another. However, some people think of the church as a provider of content, rather than a place where we congregate and meet as a body of Christ.

The local church is a covenant community that visibly manifests God's invisible kingdom. The kingdom of God comprises God's people; that is why we are called 'kingdom people'. The local church is a physical, visible expression of kingdom people.

Christians are to take church commitment seriously, as it is an important part of Christian discipleship. The leadership of the local church is a sign of one's submission to God. We can come and go, but the church will last for eternity and remain forever.

The local church expresses spiritual authority, a safe home, as a global mission and an equipping station.

BIG IDEA: The church is a safe spiritual home away from home for God's people

1 The significance of this spiritual home. 1 Peter 2:11, Ephesians 2:19

God has established the local church to be a safe haven for its Kingdom people.

Belonging to a local church is ingrained in Pr Chris' mind, no matter where he went - to be a member of the local church and actively participate in it. It was the Holy Spirit that drove him, with an understanding of Scripture, that Pr Chris must belong to a local church. He was so committed that he left his engineering career and became a pastor in DUMC, and has been serving in DUMC for 26 years..

The best thing we can do for our children is to give them stability and anchor them in the local church. The fruit of our parenting is tested when we are not around.

Before our children leave the nest, we must ask ourselves if we have trained them well while they are home with us, about their need for a local church as a spiritual home wherever they go.

What is a home? A home is a place where you can be who you are, where people accept you for who you are, but love you enough to be a better person of yourself. The church is a reflection of this home.

If you are in a foreign country, and that foreign country got invaded and went to war, where would you go? You would go to the embassy of your homeland, because that is the safest place to be in, in a foreign country that is at war.

In the same way, God has established the local church, as an embassy, a safe home away from home, that we can run to when there is a war out there. And we know there is a spiritual war out there.

The church is a people of God, a spiritual house built not of brick and mortar, but by living stone, a communion of God's people.

2 The benefits of this spiritual home. 1 Peter 1:24-25, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 6:1-2, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Peter 1:22

- a. Receiving instructions and support in being a follower of Christ.

How does a child know what is right or wrong? The child will automatically be naughty, so we need to teach the child to be good. A child is a blank slate that needs to be instructed. How would a spiritual baby in the Lord know what is good and what is bad? The only way is when the local church instructs them from the Word of God

Everything can fade away, but the church and the Word of God will endure forever.

We must move beyond elementary teachings. Do you live a life of repentance? Do you turn away from things that are not honouring God? Is your belief of the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you know your Bible? Are you baptised? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?

- b. Training/equipping in specific ministries

DUMC is known as a training and equipping church.

- c. Accountability for spiritual growth

Instructions by itself will not change us because they remain in the mind. They will only change our lives when we obey the truth. When people do not check on you, you will likely not practice the truth. That is why it is very important to be part of a small group community, where we hold each other accountable. The most loving thing we can do for someone is to confront them over something that they have done wrong in their lives, and help them to be nurtured back to life again. We need to help each other grow. God is not in the business of shaming and we should not be as well. God is in the business of rebuilding.

3 The responsibilities of this spiritual home. 1 Peter 1:22-23, Luke 6:32, Luke 6:35, 1 Peter 2:1, 1 Peter 2:2-3

- a. 1st responsibility: Love one another deeply from the heart

This refers to members of God's spiritual family. It is tough to love each other deeply from the heart. It is easy to love those who love you, people who are nice. But Jesus

said to love your enemies. How many of us belong to cell groups where we like everyone in it?

Love each other deeply from the heart because God is training you. He loves you so much that He put a really difficult person in your cell group, because He wants to train your heart. Reconcile with those that you have disagreements with. Learn to love one another. Rid yourself of all malice.

b. 2nd responsibility: Spiritual growth

You must grow. We need to grow in the Lord. We are not talking about behaviour modification, but about heart transformation.

(We have courses such as PMC, marriage course, impact training and other Equip classes. For your CG members' reference, they can visit dumc.my/equip).

Conclusion 1 Peter

When your children are still young, do not shortchange them by keeping them at home. Bring them to church. It is important to belong to a local church. Don't come to church just for the content; come also for the relationship.

SERMON REFLECTION

It all started with the unanswered phone calls.

I was a new believer then. Somehow, I knew in my heart of hearts that to grow as a follower of Christ, it would be crucial for me to belong to a cell group ("CG"). I was really spiritually hungry then, and attending church on Sundays alone was not enough for me - I needed to be in the company of fellow believers during mid-week too!

Back then, the list of CG locations and the respective CG leader's contact details were posted on DUMC's website. I called one whose location was closest to home, but the call went unanswered after several attempts. Refusing to give up, I was determined to get hold of another CG leader. This time, the CG leader, who later became a pastor in DUMC, answered my call almost immediately! After some brief introduction, I attended the CG for the first time that week, and my life has never been the same again.

For the first time in my life, I experienced what 'a home away from home' is. It is not a physical location; for me, it is the company that I am with. I am very blessed to have a loving family already, and belonging to a CG means I am blessed with an extended family in Christ as well! The existing cell members were very welcoming of new members, and everyone got along very well.

By being in the CG, I learnt a lot about the church and my spiritual life grew exponentially. The CG was a source of Christ's love, advice, support and encouragement for me. The CG was a representation of the church. Through constant encouragement, I signed up for many of the School of Leadership / Equip courses offered by DUMC, started serving in some ministries, went on mission trips and got water baptised with a fellow CG member!

The CG was also the exemplification of Christ's love in action. I learnt to love with the love of Christ, and also to constantly have each others' backs. We have never hesitated to stand with each other in prayer, and to be there for one another during both good times and bad. Once, there was a period where I faced tremendous challenges at work where my boss would constantly yell at me, and the CG rallied and prayed for me until I received my breakthrough. I would look forward to our meetings every Wednesday, and I always felt a hedge of protection around me whenever I am with the CG.

The CG was truly family for me. The fellowship was constantly very edifying so much so that tears flowed freely when the time came to multiply. It was only after being part of a CG that I realised we really need fellow believers in Christ to journey together in this life.

I truly thank my Lord God Almighty for putting the right desires in my heart as a new believer, to want to belong to a CG. Not only that, He has prepared the right CG for me and made a way for me to join that CG! This has forged a firm foundation in me that I am never to be without a CG, as an active member of the church. While different seasons bring forth different circumstances and people in my life, one anchor is constantly needed - to be part of a CG. For me, the CG is the embodiment of the church and the manifestation of the love of Christ at large. Being in a CG gives me a deep sense of belonging to the church, and is a safe haven for me in the company of a loving, genuine, Christ-centred community.

Contributed by May Ng



APPLICATION

Note to Word facilitator:

As you prepare for this session, this is a great time to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to use the questions efficaciously. You can select, modify or entirely create your own questions, according to the needs of your CG, especially if you feel that there are too many questions than required for the allocated time. The questions below are crafted with a certain flow in mind. You could use these towards the end or insert them in between your own sermon reflection and summary.

Suggested Icebreaker Question (for Welcome that would link to the Word time)

1. What do you like most about your home, that when you are away, you will miss a lot?
2. How many homes have you moved/shifted into since you were young?

3. How would you describe your ideal home?

Suggested Word Introductory Question:

- If God calls you to plant a dream church, name two (2) items/aspects which are must-haves in it.
- How different would your life be if you did not attend church nor belong to a cell group?

Suggested questions linked to each main point:

The significance of this spiritual home

- Was there a time when you had negative feelings and thoughts about being in church? Fill in the blanks: "I felt _____ because _____"
For example:
 - I felt insignificant because the church is so big.
 - I felt lonely because I don't know anyone in church.
 - I felt lost because I didn't know who to ask questions to.
- How did God and the church intervene and help you out of these situations? How can you help others in the same situation?

The benefits of this spiritual home

- Are you missing out on any of the benefits of being in a covenant relationship with DUMC? (*Benefits could include learning and understanding doctrine, receiving loving discipline, experiencing spiritual communion, mutual spiritual accountability, instructions in living, or training/equipping*). If you are missing out on the benefits, share why.
- Of the three (3) benefits of spiritual home, i.e. receiving instructions, equipping, and accountability to spiritual growth, which is most prominently demonstrated in your cell group and which area needs the most attention? Discuss.

The responsibilities of this spiritual home

- One of the responsibilities of members in a local church, is to love one another. How would you fare yourself in terms of loving other church members with sincere and pure love? How can the cell group help you and pray for you?

- As members of DUMC's family, we are also responsible to grow spiritually. How would you describe your spiritual growth over the last one year? How can the cell group help you or keep you accountable in your spiritual growth? Is there a specific area that you desire to grow in?
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Question Bank *(Extra questions you can use to bring discussion further as you see fit):*

- Church commitments are a sign of one's submission to God. Are there instances that you face, either as a family, cell group or church community, that reflects your commitment or the converse?
 - Where are you in your spiritual journey right now, and what role has the church been playing in it (or can help you in your journey)?
 - How has the church been like a family to you? Share an example.
 - Is church a destination for you? Or is it something more?
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WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



Photo by Judit Peter from Pexels

Story of the week...

“We prayed for so many things for the last nine months on their behalf and never once did our God in heaven fail to answer. From their conception, to their delivery date, and even our desire for a natural delivery...”

- Kenny Tan, CG Leader, PJN6

* Read the rest of Kenny's story on dumc.my/blog

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”

- Maya Angelou

If you or your CG member(s) has a story to share related to today's Word or any other story that speaks of His goodness, **share their/your story** [\[HERE\]](#)



PRAYER

Note to CGL: You (or someone you assign this portion to), may lead by praying OR reading these prayers together as a CG during worship.

Today's Prayer

Sabah

Let us continue to keep Sabah in prayers until a government is sworn in. Pray that Sabah will experience a new season of peace and prosperity and leave behind its poorest state in Malaysia status. Specifically, pray for:

Peace, justice and righteousness to reign and for the government elected into power to be a godly one.

Government

Godly leadership and clean government that seeks to work for the prosperity of the people of Sabah

Church

A revived church that is holy, obedient, united, courageous and loving towards one another

Blessing Over the People

A new season of peace and prosperity over this most impoverished state of Malaysia

Family

Reconciliation, healing and loving relationships

Poor & Marginalised

Compassion and restoration



OTHER RESOURCES

*Below are some links to resource you. Do **CLICK** on the images below!*

FEATURED

In view of our current changing landscape that affects us individually and corporately, here are some featured resources for you this month!



Strengthening the SOUL OF YOUR LEADERSHIP

Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership ...

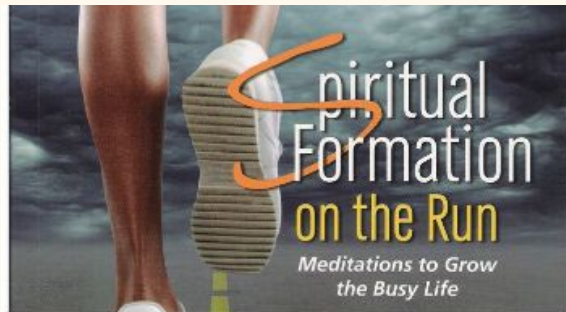
30 minutes on average

transformingcenter.org

Ruth Haley Barton

Prayer & Spirituality

Podcast



Spiritual Formation on the Run

Meditations to Grow the Busy Life

Spiritual Formation on the Run

188 pages

kairos2.com

Alex Tang

Prayer & Spirituality

E-Book (Free)



OTHER RESOURCES

Discover a host of other resources curated for you here!



DUMC STORIES

Be blessed by a compilation of inspiring DUMC Stories that you can share with others!

