Matters To Be Diligent In

Dns Lydia Chan, Elgin

There is a saying that goes: Chances are given to those that have prepared; success is given to those who work hard.

As Christians, there are many matters that call for diligence, which in turn enable us to become enriched and fulfilled spiritually.

Be Diligent in Spiritual Cultivation

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

(1 Cor 9:27)

Although Paul was a knowledgeable man (Acts 17:18) with spiritual power (Acts 20:17–18) and an apostle with the gift of visions and revelations bestowed upon him by the Lord (2 Cor 12:1–4), he emphasized on the importance of spiritual cultivation, to “discipline [his] body and bring it into subjection”.

Spiritual cultivation enables us to grow and improve ourselves, so that we can achieve perfection. When God chose Abraham, He said: “I am Almighty God; walk before me and be blameless” (Gen 17:1). The Lord Jesus also said: “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Mt 5:48).

Perfection is the aim of spiritual cultivation. Through prayer and the help of the Holy Spirit, with its fruits of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22–23), we can strive to become perfect and complete, lacking in nothing ( Jas 1:4), which in turn will please God (2 Cor 5:9). We should, therefore, be all the more diligent during the end time (2 Tim 3:1–5) in our spiritual cultivation and in our efforts to draw nearer to God (Jas 4:8).

Be Diligent in Holy Work

I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.

(Jn 9:4)

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.

(Ecc 9:10)

These Bible verses remind us that we should take time and every opportunity to do the holy work, and to do it diligently (1 Cor 16:10). On the contrary, if we do not work, God will not miss out, but He will simply call another worker to do it instead. Then, later, when we decide that we do want to work, the chance may have gone or it is no longer God’s will. We see this in the case of King David, who, although he was willing to build the temple for God (1 Chron 28:1–3; 2 Chron 6:7–10), was not permitted to do so.

The reason why we do the holy work is in order to repay God for His immeasurable love (Eph 3:18), as in the case of Peter’s mother-in-law, who served Jesus immediately after she received her blessing (Mt 8:4–15). The psalmist said: “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord” (Ps 116:12–13). To be able to do the holy work is, indeed, a blessing, and the works that we do will surely follow us (Rev 14:13).

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

(1 Cor 15:58)

Be Diligent To Enter By The Narrow Gate

Heaven is a place that Jesus is preparing for us (Jn 14:2), a most beautiful city of jasper with streets made of gold (Rev 21:11, 18, 21). This is the place that every Christian should strive to enter and dwell in (Heb 13:14).

In order to enter the heavenly kingdom, Jesus encouraged us to “strive to enter through the narrow gate” (Lk 13:24). However, the road which leads to the kingdom of heaven is difficult, because the door and path are narrow (Mt 7:13–14); the apostles also said, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

Daniel and his three friends, when faced with a life or death situation, neither feared nor retreated; instead, they held onto their faith and worshiped the one true God (Dan 2:16–18). Job was also able to praise God, despite his difficult situation (Job 1:21).

Similarly, today, we will also encounter trials and tribulations, making our journey through the narrow door a huge challenge for us. However, by persevering to the end through our faith, and by relying on the Lord, we will surely be able to enter heaven: “And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force” (Mt 11:12).

Finally, as we continue to sojourn in this world, no matter what the circumstances may be and what we might encounter, we must always stand firm in our faith, be steadfast, patient, persevere, and move forward diligently.
UK Church News

RE Teacher Training - Pr Steven Shek

Hallelujah! From late 2013 to early 2014, the UKGA’s Religious Education (RE) department arranged training to strengthen the church’s RE teachers. The theme was on how to “Be A Good Shepherd”, looking at sub-topics concerning being a good shepherd with a good conscience, and with motivation. As parents, we should be aware that some youths feel they have received little or no spiritual support in the past, for whatever reason. However, these youths of the new generation have received blessings in attending student convocations and theological seminars. The church’s investment should care more actively for our children’s upbringing in faith. Let us work hand in hand with such hardworking RE teachers, and may we have the same mind to present our children as faithful believers to God for His glory. If we can do this, then we can have a clear conscience in saying we have done our best to prevent their precious souls from following the tides of the world. Let us therefore dedicate them to the Lord as glorious servants like Samuel, enabling them to grow spiritually in God’s presence (1 Sam 3:19). May all the parents, RE teachers, and church leaders pray to the Lord for this holy matter. Surely, the Lord Jesus is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think (Eph 3:20). Amen.

Elgin

In October, we warmly welcomed several visitors: Bro Tien Yu Shek and his wife (Gifford Park), Bro Tien Fook Kwok and his wife (Leicester), Bro David and Jessica Shek (Edmonton, Canada) and Dn. Mei Shi Tsai and his wife (USA). We thank God that we received grace and encouragement from Dn Tsai. Whenever visitors come to the northern region, we always feel the warmth and love in our hearts.

From 8–11 November, Pr FF Chong assisted in an RE teachers seminar, gospel fellowship, church board seminar, Aberdeen China brethren’s service, and spiritual seminar for the whole congregation. He also had the opportunity to go to a church of another denomination and introduced our faith to them. During November and December, many brethren from around the UK visited Bro Sheng Yip Leung and his wife because of their ill health: Bro Ma Yeung Ho and family (Leicester), Dn James Tang and many Newcastle members, Sis Yoke Zhen Shek (Edinburgh) and Bro Ng Yau Chan (Gifford Park). Their visits touched and comforted the elderly couple, and they brought the love of God to us all. May God bless them and remember their love.

On 25 December, members who work and live in other places returned to join us to form a special church fellowship: Bro Duncan Shek and family (London), Bro Paul Leung and family (Edinburgh), brethren from Mainland China and a few truth-seeking friends. After the service, there was an activity to remind us to journey in unity on the path to the kingdom of heaven, followed by dinner. Everyone was filled with joy and thanksgiving in their hearts.

On 1 January 2014, the church held the New Year Thanksgiving Service on the theme ‘Praise God’, led by Drs Lydia Chan. We heard Sis Elaine Shek’s (Gifford Park) testimony, Sis Susannah Shek’s sharing about her daily life experiences, and Bro Denny Chan’s sharing about God’s grace and his experiences in serving God. Our Religious Affairs Officer, Bro Stephen Shek, used 1 Corinthians 16:13–14 to encourage us to be watchful, to stand fast in the truth, be brave, be strong, and to let all that we do be done with love in the new year. Five different groups presented hymns to praise God. In the dining hall, we had a group photo, and during our meal, a beautiful calendar was presented to each family, along with small gifts to the children and the elder members.

On 12 January, Pr Steven Shek used the topic of Holy Communion and chapters 46 and 47 of the Book of Jeremiah for Bible study services. He led the RE teachers’ training, youth fellowship and the new church board members’ training, and reminded us to keep the truth, to serve diligently and to walk steadfastly to follow His footsteps.

Edinburgh

On 21 October, we held the memorial service for our beloved Sis Dai Tai Shek (née Cheung). She was peacefully called back by the Lord on 14 October at the age of eighty-six.

On 27 October, Pr Johnny Lu led a training session on personal evangelism. All the members were encouraged concerning the importance of this divine work and its effectiveness. We also had the opportunity to participate in leafleting on the same day. We joyfully welcomed the birth of Clerisse Wei Ling Wan, daughter to Sis Mandy Fong, born on 31 December.

We pray that the Lord continues to guide the church in Edinburgh in all that we do. May all glory be unto God!

Gifford Park

Thank God, Sis Anna Song with her husband and son (Singapore) visited us in late December 2013. She shared a testimony with the congregation about God’s guidance in her son’s time of sickness. May the Lord continue to look after her family, and may we learn to share our experiences to edify those we visit.

On 1 January 2014, we held the New Year Thanksgiving Service. Through the singing of hymns and worship, we gave praises to God, thanking Him for His blessings and grace in the last year, and asking that God will continue to guide our path ahead and strengthen our faith. On 19 January, our Winter Youth Fellowship was attended by twenty-five youths. The event was led by Pr Steven Shek on the theme of ‘Do You Know The Truth?’. As youths, we must learn and keep ourselves in the truth, pass the love and grace of God to others, bear witness for Him, and glorify Him.

Newcastle

On 12–13 October, Pr Steven Shek led the national YCC meeting. On 13 October, the Sisters’ Fellowship held a Hymnal Outreach at Balmoral Court Care Home.

On 4–5 November, Eld Zhen Guang Tsai (Taiwan) of the International Assembly (IA) led a training seminar for all prospective church board members from the churches in Newcastle and Sunderland. By the guidance of God, we elected the new term of fifteen church board leaders. May the Lord fill them with His Spirit and wisdom as they serve to edify the church and glorify His Name. On 25–27 November, we held the 14th Meeting of the UKGA Board Members and the first meeting of the Church Delegates’ Conference (10th Term).

In December, we welcomed old and new friends and family members to our Gospel Soup event. On 8 and 14 December, we elected the new Sisters’ Fellowship leaders and the Church Workers’ Group leaders respectively. May the Lord bless the newly elected workers as they till and labour for Him. We held our Annual General Meeting on 25 December and reflected upon the work of the past year. The youths gathered together for our annual Winter Youth Fellowship and were edified with the theme ‘Stirred, not Shaken’.

On 1 January 2014, we started the year with a Thanksgiving Service, praising God with our voices and hearts for His enduring mercy and blessings throughout the past year. With renewed determination and strength, we ask the Lord to lead us into a new year filled with hope and opportunity to glorify Him.

With sadness of heart, we held a memorial service for our beloved Dn Paul Tang on 7 Jan. In January, we had an Elderly Members’ Fellowship, RE Teachers’ Fellowship, church board training sessions and a Church Board and Preacher’s Fellowship, led by Pr Joseph Shek.

We give thanks to God for the joyful arrivals in October 2013 of three newborns: Joyce Ho, daughter of Bro Richard and Sis Joanna Ho; Cameron Lai, son of Bro Jameson Lai and Sis Christine Lai; and Harrison Shek in January 2014, son of Bro Andy Shek and Sis Sueky Shek.

http://www.tjc.org    http://members.tjc.org

“You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance.” (Psalm 65:11)
Sunderland

On 27 October, Pr Michael Chan led an activity session with all the RE students and teachers on the topic of Halloween. Between 28–30 October, we held our annual Spiritual Convocation with the theme: ‘Living to Please the Lord’, led by Elder Zhen Guang Tsai (Taiwan) and Dr Steven Shek and Pr Joseph Shek. We had two baptisms for Sis June Percy and baby Bro Elwyn Ho.

On 9 November, we held our 2014–2016 Church Board Election for our new church board.

On 3 December, we said farewell to Sis Roxanne Tsai who moved to New Jersey to continue her married life with husband Bro Joe Tsai (Elizabeth, USA). On 10 December, we welcomed Sis Chrissie Wong (sister of Sis Kelly Wong) who came to visit the UK, as well as Bro Alexander Chong and his family (Sabah) who came to visit Bro Nathanial Chong, who is currently studying in Sunderland. On 25 December, we held our Annual General Meeting, and on 29 December, we held the End of Year Thanksgiving Service, where various groups from the church came together to offer hymnal praises.

On 8 January, thank God, Bro Kevin and Sis Katy Liu welcomed the birth of their baby boy Tobias Liu.

EPG works have continued to flourish in Sunderland. Coffee mornings have taken place over the last few months and visitors have come to find out more about the church.

In January, Bro Aaron Chin (Brunei), who is studying in London, came to visit. We also welcomed Pr Johnny Liu and Pr Joseph Shek who started pastoring us in January. We ask God to guide and bless them during their time here in Sunderland.

Leicester

From 19–21 October, Eld Zhen Guang Tsai (Taiwan), who was accompanied by his wife, delivered the Divine Workers’ Seminar, which was open to all members of the congregation. Elder Tsai encouraged the workers to be filled by God’s Spirit and wisdom so that we will be naturally close to God, know the mind of God, and be able to carry out His will. With the Spirit’s infilling, we will also have power from God, and not be in danger of relying on ourselves or walking ahead of God when we serve. Importantly, he warned us that, as workers, we might be prone to develop pride or the desire for power. As workers, we must keep our pride in check and give glory to God in our life of service.

On 3 October, Leicester held its Annual General Meeting to elect our new church board. May God grant them wisdom and strength to prosper His ministry.

From 29 December–3 January, Leicester hosted the first African Religious Education Teachers’ Training Seminar (ARETTS). It was led by Sis Patricia Chen, an RE Specialist of the USGA, Pr TK Chin and Pr FF Chong. Delegates came from Malaysia, Taiwan, Canada, USA, Austria and the UK. The content was rich and practical and dealt with key issues relevant to all RE teachers, not just to those going to Africa, such as what the teaching-learning process entails; how we can teach better to revive the faith of our students; and outlined useful teaching methods. The participants all had the chance to engage in group discussions and with the preachers to share their challenges and obtain practical advice on how to handle these issues.

Leicester hosted the Winter Spiritual Convocation on 11–13 January 2014. The services were held by Pr Steven Shek at Forest Hill and Pr Michael Chan, and attended by local members, truth-seeking friends and visiting members. The Winter Spiritual Convocation with the theme: ‘Living to Please the Lord’, led by Elder Zhen Guang Tsai (Taiwan) led our Workers’ Training Seminar in preparation for the church board elections. With a new term and board members, we pray that God guides them to steer the church in truth. We also welcomed workers and students returning to London by holding a cooking fellowship, followed by a themed ‘Make London Your Home’ treasure hunt in Covent Garden.

We praise God for the addition of baby Elysie Lai, daughter of Bro Tommy and Sis Maria Lai, born on 8 November. We held our first Gospel Tea event on 30 November, welcoming eighteen truth-seeking friends that included our friends, family and people invited through street preaching to the church. All the members were actively involved in the preparations and personal evangelism.

On 24–25 December, we held our End of Year Special Service and welcomed visitors from different parts of the UK.

Through the guidance of God, we hosted the 11th Africa Voluntary Missionary Workers’ Training Seminar (AVMTS) on 5–7 January. Topics included foot washing, one true church, baptism, one true God, religious education, Holy Communion and servitude. Youths from different corners of the world came together to study the truth and to learn how they can assist in the missionary work in Africa. On 11 January, we held a joyful Choir Fellowship led by Sis Suwon Kim (Korea/Heidelberg). We praised God with our voices and learned how to improve our service to God through singing hymns.

We praise God for two young additions to London Church: Alex Cheung, son of Bro Alan and Sis Felicia Cheung, on 15 January; and Isabella Chui, daughter of Bro David and Sis Joyce Chui, on 24 January.

Forest Hill

Thank God for His guidance and blessing. Even though we have a relatively small number of members, we are all united.

Starting from December 2013, we will hold regular Sisters’ Fellowships to discuss spiritual and practical matters, share experiences on how to look after and raise our children in the Lord, and we also have crafty and cooks classes. This month, we created greeting cards that were posted to the various churches in the UK. On 27 December, we held the first Friday evening Bible study, led by Pr TK Chin, on the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. It was attended by seventeen brothers and sisters. We will continue to hold these whenever there is a visiting preacher.

We held the Winter Spiritual Convocation on 11–13 January 2014. The services were led by Pr TK Chin and Pr Michael Chan, and attended by local members, truth-seeking friends and visiting members. The Forest Hill Senior Choir presented two hymns. Our new benches for RE students arrived from Taiwan. The children will be able to sit with their teachers and use the opening tabletop to study the Bible and take notes.

Portsmouth

On 5 January, we held a New Year Thanksgiving Service. After lunch, the members and truth-seeking friends had fellowship together, concluding the day with much joy and laughter.

On 19 January, Pr Michael Chan paid his first visit this year and held an RE teachers’ training seminar. From 2–6 February, Pr Steven Shek held an RE Teachers’ Training Seminar. On 16 March, we held our first Gospel Tea and Coffee event, as well as a truth-seekers’ class on the Ten Basic Beliefs.

Youth Coordination Centre - Pr Steven Shek

Praise be to the Lord Jesus Christ that YCC has received a new set of youth co-ordinators to support the work of strengthening the next generation. Preachers have assisted in calling the youths to “Stand Guard with Truth”. Throughout the churches, we have promoted the necessity for the members, especially the youths, to know the truth and to discern false teachings. The preachers highlighted the destructive nature of heretical teachings and the subtleties in which they are planted, and eventually divide the church.

The youths should take warning not just from the present situation of church confusion; as the church grows, we know heresies will be an ever-increasing danger. Practically, the youths should follow the good examples set by church leaders in zealously devoting time and effort to becoming equipped with the truth. May the church encourage our youths to attend local and national events and international workers seminars, so they can be armed with the truth to preach and protect. Glory, glory, Hallelujah, Our God is marching on!” Amen.

http://www.tjc.org http://members.tjc.org

“You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance.” (Psalm 65:11)


Church Events

Gifford Park: New Year Thanksgiving Service, 1 January 2014

Sunderland: Sis June Percy and Bro Elwyn Ho’s baptism, 30 October 2013

London: Choir Fellowship, 11 January 2014

London: Youth Fellowship, 12 October 2013

Dnrs Martha Chan (Gifford Park) with Sis Soong, her husband and son

Sunderland: Group photo from Spiritual Convocation, 26–30 October 2013

“You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance.” (Psalm 65:11)