

Gradual progress in sharing our heart, and principles, with others.

Birmingham, United Kingdom, 27. October 2013



Ten different nationalities for our Family Evening.



The FFWPU symbol at the heart of our faiths.

In our Birmingham community, we have been trying for several years to find ways for more of us to feel inspired to share our heart, values and principles with others. This has become even more focused since the arrival of True Mother's 20/20 vision. Probably most of us are searching to understand what this means for each of our families, and communities, and how we can be more effective and fulfilled as Blessed Families, especially if we are living in our Hometown. There are so many very real challenges to try and overcome, for parents and children alike.

We can't claim to have solved everything, or found some magical formula, but we have felt God working to help us during the last 12 months, and since Foundation Day, in terms of more of us being active and also meeting many good people.

Since 2009, we have tried to have at least one evening a week when we share the Principle publicly. Not always possible, but more or less. We have also tried to invite existing friends and guests, who have connected with us through UPF and particularly WFWP activities, to study the Principle. This is always on an individual, case-by-case basis, if we feel the person is open-minded and has an appropriate foundation to receive Principle content. We have always felt that the harmonising of FFWPU, WFWP and UPF efforts will accelerate any developments in our movement, through the combination of words and deeds, truth and its expression in service to others, being seen to 'practice what we preach' so to speak.

We felt to call our study evenings our 'Family Evening', partly to try and recapture the spirit of our earlier days, and partly because we want to create an atmosphere where members and guests alike feel they are on a journey together, rather than an 'us and them' type of feeling. So some of our guests come an hour or so early, some of them straight from work, and have some simple food with us - pizza, salad, etc. Then we chat informally for a short time, getting to know anyone new and making them feel at home. When we start the actual meeting, we briefly introduce ourselves and acknowledge all the different countries and cultures we represent. Then a couple of songs together, which can really help to create a good atmosphere. After that we share one part, or aspect, of the Principle, anything from 40 to 75 minutes, depending on the spirit of the occasion. We really try to make the Principle relevant for peoples' day to day life, as much as possible, and relevant to what is going on in society and the things we hear in the news, and we try to involve the guests a little bit through asking questions here and there, or using them as examples occasionally which can be quite funny. This doesn't dilute the Principle in any way, but it generally helps to make everyone feel part of the occasion, rather than a 'teacher/student' type of situation, and reinforces the feeling of being on a journey together.

Following the presentation, we have some question and answer, and a chance for people to express their ideas and inspirations, another song to conclude and then informal time with refreshments and sharing.

We encourage our longer-term guests to come and support the newer guests, even if they've heard the topic before, and also encourage our members to come and support, even if they don't have a guest. They can help to create a good atmosphere just by being there, and making the effort to come, can often be inspired again by the Principle, and can feel more confident to reach out and bring a new, or existing, friend to the evening.

We are trying to develop a Public Sunday Service as well, once a month, which can have a broader appeal - based on Father's words but including other faith traditions. It hasn't always been possible every month, but we are getting there.

Last week, October 20th to 27th, was one of our best weeks so far for sharing the Principle. Eight people heard some aspect of the Principle in members' homes, either watching a video or one-to-one sharing. Ten people, including 7 new guests,

attended our Family Evening, along with 6 members and 1 second generation. Another member had the opportunity to give a public talk, as part of an Adult Education class, about someone they admired and chose to speak about True Father. We concluded the week with a Public Sunday Service, on the topic of 'Spiritual Growth in the Physical World'. We had a total of 14 guests, four of whom were new, and one of these was brought by a new member. These might seem like numbers, but behind each one is a lot of effort, both individual and collective, and we can feel that God is trying hard to help us. Especially continuing to reach out to others, even though we are all faced with many internal and external challenges.

It is all a 'work in progress', we have a long way to go, but we feel hopeful as long as we can see and feel God is alive and working in our lives.



Members and guests attending Sunday Service. Rashioh (Sierra Leone) offering a Christian song of praise.