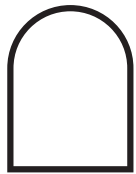
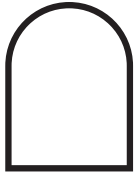


Family Gathering Rhythms



- 01 Family
- 02 Meals
- 03 Worship
- 04 Scripture
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House Church Rhythms

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Family

Jesus came to establish the new (multicultural, multiracial, and multigenerational) family of God. We leave old boundaries of family for our new community marked by honor, humility, respect, and love. Creating space and time for people to connect, become known, for friendships to form, and for life to be shared. Opening up our homes, our dinner tables, and our lives. A place where, "There is no need among them."

Expectations

Being part of a House Church isn't just a small group. We aren't just committing to a once a week meeting where we barely know each other. This is a commitment to covenantal community where you are now submitting your life, schedule, and expectations to each other.

Attendance

You are committing to regular attendance and participation in your House Church. If you can't make it to House Church, you show each other the honor of calling the House Church pastor to let them know you are not going to make it. If there is a prolonged season of absence, there is freedom to step back from House Church until you make space in your schedule to allow for House Church.

Regular Life

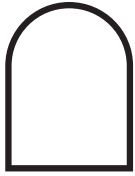
If possible, sit with your House Church at church gatherings. Do extracurricular activities together (go to the movies, the park, the beach, etc.) When necessary, help each other with resources and finances. Pray together, be invested on behalf of one another.

It is not the responsibility of the House Church pastor to meet with each person outside of House Church hours. Everyone is committed to everyone else. Share the burden of relationship.

Apprenticeship to Jesus

Participate in Garden Life Course together. Share your Rule of Life with your House Church, have them hold you accountable to your discipleship to Jesus.

We do this all in honor. So in honor we submit to living under the authority of the Scriptures and the guidance of the Garden Elders. Because of this, we don't tolerate gossip and slander for anyone. We do our best to honor everyone, even those who cause us frustrations.



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Multiplication

Multiplication is a natural and celebrated part of a House Churches life. It is flexible and should never be rushed. We listen to God's Spirit in how He is guiding your group. But with that in mind, you should be preparing the family in a few ways.

Identify Those who are Called

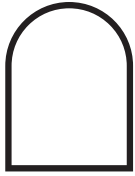
You should be paying attention to those in your House Church that show the calling of being a Spiritual Mother and Father. They are humble, pursuing holiness, hungry for God's presence, and are healthy (emotionally, spiritually, & relationally).

Raise up Those who are Called

Once you identify those who are called, invite them to intentionally come alongside you in leading the House Church. The steps of raising people up can be summarized (I do you watch, I do you do, you do I watch). Allow them to take risks, fail, and grow as they explore what it means to become a Spiritual Mother and Father.

Release Those who are Called

There will be a natural point in your House Churches' life span when it is time to multiply. Like a good family, if you've raised up your children to be mature there will be a time when they are to leave, similarly your House Church Leaders will leave and start another House Church and they are to bring others from the current House Church in order to continue the healthy culture they have been part of.



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Meals

(30-45 min)

Every time you gather, every time we eat together, we remember Jesus' sacrifice by celebrating the Lords Supper. This is best expressed in a meal together around a table.

Helpful Tips

Depending on the size of your group, you will need to get creative on how to eat together. This may feel like a portion of House Church that you may want to skip through, but gathering around a meal is meaningful to everyone present.

Set a Theme and try Potluck Style

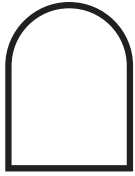
People like having a clear theme of what they will be eating. Setting a theme ahead of time (Italian, Mediterranean, Mexican, Breakfast for Dinner, etc.) is a fun way for people to explore meals and participate in the gathering around the table.

Bring Your Own Dinner

Depending on the free time of your group, you can invite people to bring their own dinners and save it until you are all together. Eating together is the most important part!

Seasonal Feasts

There are also seasonal times for you and your House Church to gather around a celebratory feast. We are family, and if we take that serious, find times throughout the year to be family outside of your one time of the week. Go out to a restaurant that represents the different cultures present in your House Church (Colombian, Russian, Oaxacan, Romanian, Peruvian, Korean, Japanese, etc.) or meet for a Holiday Feast (Friendsgiving, Christmas Party, Easter, Epiphany, etc.). Have fun and intentionality!



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Communion

(5-10 min)

Gathering around a meal is beautiful and it can build deep relationships, but we want to be intentional to incorporate Communion as a sacrament whenever you gather. It is Communion that roots us in the reality of who our House Church is built on.

Communion is a powerful symbol that reminds us that the church is our family. It is not built on socio-economic status, education, ethnic similarities, or our taste in worship music. The Church is a family built on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and it brings people from all of life together. Communion is the 'yes' and 'amen' to "Jesus is our king, brother, and savior." In this weekly affirmation, we are rooted in a reality more true than our schedules, our familial bonds, our bank accounts, and degrees. It is a holistic rooting of our lives together as family.

Gathering Your Elements

Typically, Communion is made up of bread and wine (grape juice) as a clear reference to Jesus' body and blood. This was a common element of the meal structure in the Ancient Near East of Jesus' time. But if you do not have that on hand feel free to get creative and find what may be readily available (Chips & Salsa, Donuts & Coffee, Pancake & Syrup, etc.) The elements are not strict, it is the symbol that they represent.

Bring Your Eyes to Heaven

Your role in leading Communion is simply to gather the elements and to bring your groups eyes to the richness of this sacrament. Here are a few things you can do to help your House Church.

Read Scripture

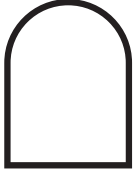
Examples: Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:14-20

Talk about the Symbol of Jesus' Body

Summary: God physically came on Earth as Jesus, lived the life we were called to live, and modeled what it meant to be truly Human partnered with the Holy Spirit in obedience to the Father

Talk about the Symbol of Jesus' Blood

Summary: Jesus died the death that we all deserved in order to bring new life. We are reminded that death no longer has the final say, but it is this sacrifice that invites us to lay down our lives for God and for each other.



House Church Rhythms

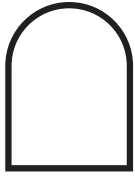
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Talk about the Implications of How Communion Reorients our Vision of Family

Summary: It is the body and blood of Jesus that his church is built on. We are here not because of what the world has given us to share and have in common, but our relationships and current love for each other is built on a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Bless the Group & the Elements

Pray for the group and the elements. Offer them up to honor what God has done and what he is doing.



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Worship

(10-20 min)

We have the privilege of ministering to God through our worship. Praising God ushers in His presence in a powerful way. As you lead this section, you are leading the group into God's presence and creating an environment that is focused on worshiping Him.

As a leader, you want to facilitate the best environment possible for everyone to be able to engage with God in worship. This means thinking through ways to make the worship experience engaging for all members.

As you are prayerfully preparing to lead the group in worship, the main focus is to usher in the Holy Spirit and presence of God throughout your time. As the Spirit moves, we want to discern where He is leading us and maintain a flexible posture for changing directions as God prompts our hearts to do so.

Worship can take many forms and we want to encourage you to explore the different areas as you choose which option fits you and your group the best.

Helpful Tips

- Make sure everyone is ready to start
- Share the vision for worship before beginning
- Communicate directions that members will need for the activity
- Pray to end worship time

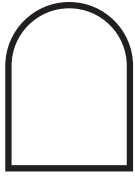
Worship Ideas

Music Playlist

The best songs to choose for worship are simple songs that are easy to sing and follow. You may also consider using songs that are sung on a Sunday morning. This way, more people will be familiar with them.

Sing a Psalm

The book of Psalms plays an important role in worship, acting as both a Scripture reading and an act of musical praise. After all, many of the psalms were written as songs.



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Lectio Divina

Read a specific passage of scripture four times in one sitting, giving ample time to meditate and reflect on the text. Each time through the passage, the reader takes a different focus (i.e., Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest). Give instructions on how participants should listen and what they're "looking for" as the leader slowly reads the passage. Then pause for a minute to let the congregation reflect before reading the passage again.

[PracticingtheWay - Lectio Divina](#)

Thankfulness, Worship, Intercession (TWI)

TWI is spending time in prayer with a small group, thanking God for anything and everything, worshipping Him by focusing on one specific attribute of His character that the Holy Spirit highlights and interceding on behalf of those you are prayer for from a place of revelation of who God is.

[Antioch Revival Team - TWI](#)

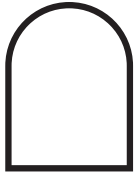
Art

God offers a unique way to discover God's truth. This process is less about the end product and more about the connection with God. Paint, journal, or draw Father God as your provider, Jesus as your friend, and Holy Spirit as your Comforter.

Corporate Worship

We desire to raise up worship leaders who are hungry for the presence of God and His Word. If there are people in your House Church who are talented in singing and/or playing an instrument, make space for them to lead the rest in a time of corporate worship. This is not a time just to sing songs, but together as a family to sing worship to God.

This can be one of the most powerful times of your House Church. It is important that you are aware of what the Holy Spirit is doing so that you can respond accordingly. If you feel God's presence during worship don't feel the need to rush through. Always respond to where you feel God moving and resting. Your job is to follow the voice of your Father.



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Scripture

(15-20 min)

We are a community rooted in scripture. The Bible is central to the way we structure our lives and community. We contextualize our message and ministry by holding ourselves accountable to the word of God in what, how, and why we do what we do. In House Church we want to keep scripture at the center of the discussion.

The leader's job is to facilitate the discussion. The goal is to encourage a discussion that edifies and strengthens the group while ensuring Jesus is at the center of it all. One of the primary goals of the leader is to create an environment where people feel safe to share what God is putting on their hearts. An important ingredient here is a caring, non-judgmental and confidential atmosphere—a safe place where people can be transparent and share their deepest thoughts.

Listening is key for the leader: keeping one ear open to the members and the other open to the Holy Spirit's leading. As the Spirit moves, we want to discern where He is leading us and maintain a flexible posture for changing directions as God prompts our hearts to do so.

Helpful Tips

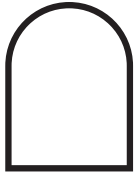
- Get people excited about the topic with a good introduction
- Lead through four or five open-ended questions
- Watch for people who tend to dominate (or shrink away from) the discussion
- Don't let the discussion wander; continually bring it back to center
- Be prepared to repeat and clarify points for the group
- Be courteous, fair-minded and impartial
- Pull all strands together at the end so one central thought is communicated
- Wrap up the discussion by summarizing key points and providing a springboard into ministry time, when members pray for each other at the end of the meeting

Discussion Ideas

Curriculum

One of the primary resources Garden Church offers House Churches is our own curriculum. These are meant to be downloaded and dispersed to everyone in your House Churches to be read in between gatherings to facilitate discussion and reflection during Family Gatherings.

[House Church Curriculum](#)



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Debrief the Sunday Sermon

Discuss the sermon from the Sunday Gathering. Give a short summary of what was shared on previous Sunday. Then write out a few questions to go through that you feel will facilitate a thoughtful discussion.

[Discussion Question Guide](#)

Topical Areas

You may want to explore different Biblical areas such as the character of God or a special theme in the Bible such as forgiveness. While studying the Bible you will find that many passages speak on the same topic.

[BibleProject - Bible Studies](#)

Inductive Bible Study

One of the best ways to study the Bible is through “inductive” study. This method makes observations on a passage of Scripture and then draws conclusions based on those observations.

[Bible Study Guide](#)

Courses

Your House Church may be going through different lessons such as learning to read the Bible, learning how to hear the voice of God, or many others that teach the group various topics.

Examples:

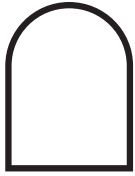
[PracticingtheWay](#)

[Garden Life Courses](#)

Book

Reading a book together may provide a wider and deeper experience into an area that the group is experiencing. It can give a different perspective on the topic from an author who has experienced and expertise in that area.

[Recommended Reading Books](#)



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Prayer

(15-30 min)

In order to intentionally welcome God's presence in our group gatherings, we want to welcome Him into our conversations. Before every House Church take time to invite God to highlight how He wants to move in your family. Then when we are together, all we have to do is invite God to meet you, and your House Church in the many ways of engaging in prayer.

Prayer Guidelines

In your gatherings you can practice a variety of ways to engage in prayer. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when you are praying in a group.

Compassion: If you want to pray for people, you need to have a desire to pray for people. You don't have to pray, it's a ministry of compassion. Jesus ministered out of Compassion. Matthew 14:14, Mark 1. Compassion pulls an individual out of their problems by focusing on the answer. When Jesus saw someone bound by sickness or demons, he was moved by compassion to restore the person to wholeness. Compassion literally means to "suffer with."

Honor: We want to honor the dignity of the individual for whom we are praying. We want to ensure people are being treated with respect, and we are aware that receiving prayer can be a sensitive and vulnerable situation. Love the person in front of you (Philippians 2:3-5). View them as an individual not a project or another testimony.

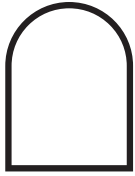
Love: The goal for anyone receiving prayer is to feel loved. Create a space for people to encounter a loving God by showing them love and compassion.

Openness: We pray and invite others to pray as a response and in the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Simplicity: When we pray we don't need to be elaborate, weird, overbearing, or mystical. Sometimes this happens, but our goal is to be normal, and demystify the Spirit's activity in order to enable others to encounter God.

Praying for others is:

- Bringing people into an experience with the Holy Spirit
- Seeing people saved, healed and delivered.
- Releasing God's love and revealing the Father's Heart
- Encouraging, exhorting, and comforting others by speaking life into their lives.



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Praying for others is NOT:

- An opportunity to council, rebuke, correct, direct or preach.
- Giving specific directional words like “you’re going to move to Ohio in February
- A counseling ministry If needed, you can refer them to the prayer team.
- Promoting your own way of ministering. You must be willing to submit to leadership and follow their model of ministry.

Intimacy with God before Ministry

We aren’t called to operate out of performance. Stop trying so hard. Ministering breakthrough and walking in power is easy when you realize it’s not about you! It’s all about Him. Remind yourself what God says about you, so that even when you don’t see breakthrough your identity won’t be shaken.

Confidentiality and Responsibility

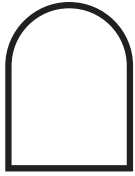
Everything a person shares with you during a time of ministry should be kept confidential unless it is illegal activity. We are required by law to report illegal activity. If someone admits to child abuse, or domestic violence, or any other illegal act, failure to report that activity is by law a crime. Child abuse is defined to include physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect or sexual molestation. If one admits to illegal activity, the best course of action would be to report that information to your pastor and have him or her file a report.

Ministry Time

We value providing opportunities for people to respond to God’s Word and experience His love in a real and tangible way. We never want to miss an opportunity for God to meet us. So we always make space for ministry time whenever we gather. This is best done after a time of discussion and/or worship. Ask God what He may be saying to your group and how He wants to move.

1. Ask: Ask those you are praying for if you can pray for them. Ask them to close their eyes and hold their hands open in a posture of receiving. Then, ask them to pray their own needs quietly and ask them to invite the Holy Spirit to minister to them. Finally, ask if you can put your hand on them to pray for them.

2. Commentate: Explain what you are going to do and how you are going to do it. It’s important



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to have an ongoing conversation and commentate as you go, basically explain what you see happening. Remember, keep your eyes open and watch what God is doing through their physical expressions and comfort them as you go along. There may be physical expressions and there may not. Some may include. Eyes fluttering, breathing increased, shaking, falling, sweat pronounced, etc.

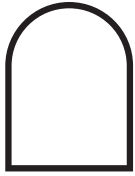
3. Wait. Wait, wait, wait: Take your time and allow the Holy Spirit to come and minister to the person you are praying for. While you wait, you can begin to ask the Holy Spirit (quietly), “Is there anything you want me to say?” Prayers to use at this time out loud are “Come Holy Spirit,” “More Power,” “Thank you Lord,” “I Bless what you are doing.”

4. Pray: At this point, you can begin to pray for the person. If you don’t feel anything, don’t worry about it, just keep saying, “Come, More, Thank you, I Bless what you are doing.” It’s not about conjuring up something for them, it’s about God ministering. If you have something to pray, say it with confidence and gentleness, never speaking on behalf of the Lord (avoid “thus saith Lord” types of statements, avoid dates and mates). As you give words, or pictures try to be concise and intentional in your explaining. Remember, be as normal as possible and commentate as you go. Things to say during prayer time are, “This is totally normal,” if they cry, assure them it’s okay to cry, if they laugh, give them permission to laugh and make sounds.

Signs of the Spirit

- Shining faces (exodus 34:29)
- Tears and Crying
- Peace (Romans 14:17)
- Joy (Acts 13:52)
- Power
- Often rapid eye movement, tears, heat, shaking, heaviness and resting in the Spirit

5. Debrief: When you are through praying for the person, ask them if anything you said meant anything to them. If nothing, don’t worry about it. We never know what God is up to when we pray, be obedient. If something has happened, encourage them to tell the story and remember the story. Stories of God moving help to build the faith and expectation of the church. Leave the person with either a verse, referral to after care ministry if necessary, or encouragement.



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PRACTICAL TIPS

- Use breath mints. Don't blow on people.
- Don't pray over people in loud tongues and draw attention to yourself!
- No pushing or heavy hands.
- Keep your eyes open when praying so you can see what the Holy Spirit is doing.
- Pray in pairs, as we often complement each other in our gifts and accountability increases.
- Be aware of inappropriate body contact.
- Don't tell anyone to stop taking medication from a doctor.
- Don't pray something over someone that you wouldn't pray over yourself.
- Don't come to minister dressed like you're ready to go to the beach. Dress modestly.
- Ask permission to lay hands on others.
- Also, men pray with men and women pray with women unless praying as a married couple.

Additional Prayer Models

Large Group Prayer

Choose a topic, person, scripture, or grief that you want to invite the group to pray into. Assign someone to open in prayer and someone to close, then group can interject at anytime as prayers are offered to God.

Partner Prayer

Break into groups of 2 (preferably women with women and men with men). Each person shares what they are carrying: it could be in reference to what was shared that night in House Church, what they were carrying before the group, or what they are looking forward to. Then their partner prays for them.

Chain Prayer

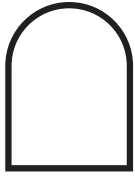
Similar to Partner Prayer, smaller groups are made up of 5-4 people. Each person shares what they want prayer for. Then the remaining group members pray for the one who just shared.

Prayer Cards

Each person writes down 3 prayers. One member takes another persons card and prays for them all week.

Healing Prayer

If there are specific physical, spiritual, emotional, relational burdens that your group is carrying,



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lay hands on the person and pray for them to be healed. It does not have to be labored nor strenuous, but simple and direct.

Allowing people to share what God is speaking to them

Following a time of prayer, worship, or discussion God may be speaking to your group. If you sense that your group has something to share, ask them what is happening and what they are experiencing.

Silence: Quiet reflection

Prayer does not have to be a performance. Sometimes the best response is your group to sit in silence. That can be scary for some, so give your group a set time of silence (1 minute, 3 minutes, 5 minutes, 10 minutes, etc.) During this time, as the leader, pray to yourself that God speaks to each person personally.

Calling out the Gold: Encouraging one another

Prophecy is simply speaking the Father's heart to others. What does God see and how can you call that out in others? Some things are so easy to affirm in someone, but often times God will highlight to each other what a treasure each individual is. Spend that time in a group or in smaller groups going around and "calling out the gold" in each other.

Jesus in the Room

A simple practice is having your group wait with a clear mind after asking "if Jesus was in the room, what would he say?" Some people will have a word for the group and some will have a specific vision for someone else in the room. Then, whoever saw something gets to share it in the group.

This can be one of the most powerful times of your House Church. It is important that you are aware of what the Holy Spirit is doing so that you can respond accordingly. Remember, your job isn't to make something happen. Your job is to follow the voice of your Father.

Resources

To find more resources on prayer for you and your group, visit:

www.gardenchurch.life/empowered