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# Multiplying House Churches

## Lesson 4: House church planning workshop

Before we move into more topics related to multiplying house churches, we're going to take some time to begin shaping our new house church using some of the ideas we've learned so far. By now, you might already have some dreams and visions about your new church, so we want to get those ideas on paper to design some rhythms and practices to help your church look similar to what we saw in the early church. We also want to consider the heart of your group and the environment that will draw people into this beautiful lifestyle of relational intimacy with Christ and his followers.

### **Pray for your house church**

Before we begin, take some time to invite the Holy Spirit into your time of thinking and planning. Ask the Spirit how he sees your group and what ideas he has in store for you. After you pray, spend a few minutes, just being silent before the Lord, and listen for his voice. Write any ideas or thoughts that come to your mind, related or even unrelated. Then take a few minutes to share these ideas with your group.

### **Plan your house church**

Below is a list of questions to discuss with your group about your new house church. If at any point you cannot agree, or the ideas just aren't flowing, simply stop, pray, and be silent for a few minutes. See what the Holy Spirit has to say.

1. Consider how you will engage in corporate worship (readings, praise reports, prayer, song, etc.). [Acts 2:42-47]
2. Discuss various options for learning the Word of God together as a group. Consider The Kite Method or Discovery Bible Studies (see The Kite Method for Discovery Bible Study questions), methods that allow for group sharing and revelation. Explore the idea of studying themes, reading books of the Bible together, or using the Discovery Bible app. Create a study plan for the next several weeks. You can also incorporate times where everyone shares a revelation, a word of instruction, or something from their own times with God that week. What will devotion to the Word of God look like for you and your group?
3. Discuss how you will incorporate prayer into your meeting, your weekly schedule, or your individual times together. What will devotion to prayer look like for your group?
4. We see in the first century that gatherings centered around a simple meal and the Lord's Supper. Discuss what this might look like for your group. How could the group share in the responsibilities for this part of the gathering? What will devotion to breaking bread together look like for your group? [I Corinthians 11:17-34, Acts 20:7]
5. Consider the practice of self-examination during the Lord's Supper, both its purposes and benefits. How could you implement this practice in your time of remembering the Lord? This practice can be done silently, corporately, or in small groups and can easily lead into a time of

personal sharing, confession, and praying for one another's inner needs. You can introduce a passage for meditation during this time to guide the time of self-examination, or you can center the time around responding personally to the Bible study you did as a group.

6. Consider how you will handle the giving of financial gifts within the house church, among a body of house churches, or even churches outside your fellowship that may be in need. What will caring for the church and the needs of others look like in your group? How can your group effectively shepherd the giving of resources to others in need? [ I Timothy 5:16, James 1:27, James 2:15-16, Philippians 4:14-19, III John 1:5-8, I Corinthians 16:1-3
7. Take a minute of silence to give everyone a chance to think about their own natural and spiritual gifts and to consider ways they wish to use these gifts to serve the church, including food and communion preparation, worship and song, facilitating Bible discussions, teaching, praying one for another, serving, administering offerings, or something else. [I Corinthians 14:26-31]
8. What will commitment to the gatherings look like? How often will you meet for worship, prayer, and/or teaching? Will you do everything in one gathering, or do you need a separate meeting during the week for certain elements?
9. Consider how your group will encourage one another during the week outside weekly gatherings (beyond texting), i.e. prayer / discipling partners or groups, one-on-one phone calls, coffee times, meals, outreach, or just doing life together. Discuss what it means to care genuinely for each other and what weekly and monthly rhythms would be most encouraging and strengthening.
10. What are your personal expectations for the group and other believers within the group? (i.e. personal times with the Lord, personal righteousness, relationships with others, behavior and treatment of others, participation, attendance, or something else.)
11. If you have various cultures in your group, consider how culture can play a role to encourage others from different backgrounds, including food, sharing, teaching, music, clothing, etc.
12. Consider how often your group will meet for planning and assessing the group's growing needs.
13. Work through some of the practical aspects of your gatherings:
  - a. What time will you meet and where? Will one person host, or can others host as well?
  - b. Create a schedule for your meetings. Will you do the same thing each week, or will it vary? Consider the main meeting itself, as well as the weekly and monthly schedule.
  - c. How will you communicate with your group (i.e. email, text, WhatsApp, Signal, etc.)?
  - d. What are the different roles for your gatherings? How will you delegate these roles?
  - e. Discuss transportation needs and arrangements, if anyone needs rides to meetings.
14. How will you ensure that each member coming into the group understands and grows in the heart of your church?
15. Take a minute to discuss anything else that is on your mind, if it hasn't already been covered.

16. While you, your group, and the Holy Spirit know what is best for your group, here is a sample house church model and sign-up plan for a visual, if needed:

**House Church Meeting Time:** (3 hours)

Greeting (15 min)

Meal (45 min)

Welcome and Worship (15 min)

Bible discussion / time of sharing testimonies, prophecy, revelation, instruction, etc. (1 hour)

Lord's Supper with self-examination [meditation time can link to the discussion, or a separate passage can be shared] (5-10 min)

Small group sharing and praying one for another (15 min)

Discuss group needs: (5 min)

- Physical or financial needs of the members or others you are serving / give direction for offerings
- Communicate the schedule for the week / upcoming events

Fellowship / clean-up (15 min)

**Sign-up Plan**

Hosting

Meal planning and preparation

Worship

Lord's Supper

Bible discussion facilitation, teaching, or sharing

Offering management / announcements

Other