

A GUIDE FOR STARTING YOUR HOME CHURCH



THE HOME CHURCH

Have you ever heard of a home church model?

Did you know that the first 350 years of the early church was held mainly in the homes of believers?

Have you ever wondered why one would consider starting a home church?

Do you have questions about what a home church is?

Are there benefits to having a home church?

WE HOPE THIS GUIDE SERVES TO ANSWER ALL YOUR QUESTIONS AND THAT YOU WOULD BE EAGER TO BEGIN YOUR OWN HOME CHURCH TODAY!

HISTORY OF THE HOME CHURCH

The early Christians had limited public places to worship for fear of persecution, so they opened their homes to break bread, learn from the apostles, pray together, gather in unity, praise God for his favor, and to worship the King of Kings ([Acts 2:42-47](#)).

Nearly 25 years after Acts was written, Paul wrote a letter to the churches of Corinth, and he said them, “Aquila and Priscilla [or Prisca] greet you warmly in the Lord, **and so does the church that meets at their house**” ([1 Corinthians 16:19](#) – emphasis added). About two years later, Paul wrote a similar message to the churches of Rome, and said to them, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also **the church that meets at their house**” ([Romans 16:3-5](#) – emphasis added)

And again, nearly a decade later, Paul wrote a letter to the churches of Colossae stating, “Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha **and the church in her house**” ([Colossians 4:15](#) – emphasis added). Here we notice the genesis of the Church was not only in homes, but also included both male and female leadership.

The theme of the house church runs true throughout the New Testament and continued all the way into the middle of the 4th century following Christ. It wasn’t until the Roman Empire, under Constantine instituted a public space to gather, and here we see the birth of the corporate Church. However, the idea of house churches continued throughout each century, and oftentimes arose amidst the adversities of persecution, and in the name of a spiritual rebirth, or revival, which is happening all over North America, The United Kingdom, and China to name a few.

In the four Gospels, we hear Jesus utter phrases about the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven nearly 80 times, while he only mentions the word church (more accurately, the ecclesia) two times: once when speaking to Peter in [Matthew 16](#) and another time in [Matthew 18](#) when dealing with sin amongst the brethren.

Nowhere in the bible does it condemn the gathering of the saints in homes, and nor should we condemn those who long to gather in similar fashions at this present moment in time. This does not suggest that we should do away with the corporate gatherings, as the author of Acts recounts, “Day after day, **in the temple courts and from house to house**, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah” ([Acts 5:42](#)). We should meet in the temple courts, as well as the homes, and we at Kingdom Learners want to help others establish the latter so we can strengthen, equip, and edify the saints!

WHY START A HOME CHURCH

For centuries we have gathered in public assembly to worship the One true God and to praise Him for his mighty and wonderful deeds, and we should never stop doing so.

However, we must pause and reflect on the overall health and wellbeing of the Church. We have done a wonderful job growing churches as organizations, but have we kept up with growing the Church in spiritual maturity and discipline? Have we made true disciples of Christ over the past 100 years, or have we merely cloned our pastors? Have we grown in spiritual power and authority, or have we just grown in numbers? Is the Church thriving right now in a kingdom manner, or is it thriving in the world? Can we do more? Should we be doing a better job of strengthening, encouraging, and equipping fellow believers of Christ?

For years, our family would show up to church each weekend and we would leave wondering, “Is there more to this kingdom life?” We would ask, “What’s missing, or what else could we be doing?” We were truly thankful for the church and all they blessed us with, but we felt chosen to equip more people to move beyond hearing a Sunday message and towards becoming doers of God’s word ([James 1:22](#)). So, in 2018, my wife and I started a church out of our home.

We wanted to provide an intimate setting for people to gather. We wanted to ask questions and seek answers collectively. We longed to be in deep and meaningful relationships with fellow believers and to pass on to them all that we have learned ([2 Timothy 2:2](#)). We embarked on a journey beyond the four walls of the building, and into the kingdom of God, and we wanted to take others with us. We wanted to give others some of the new tools that we picked up along our journey, as well as to sharpen the tools they already had their toolbelts.

So, why did we start a house church? We did so to grow in intimacy and to begin working together as a team of believers to grow into the full measure of Christ. We started a house church to equip the saints for works of ministry, to grow in faith and unity with like-minded believers, to grow in our knowledge of Christ through asking questions and seeking answers, to begin speaking the truth in love, to mature in our faith, and to do our part ([Ephesians 4:11-16](#)).

Do you feel called to do the same? Are you ready to start your own house church but you have questions or concerns? In the following sections of this guide, we will discuss things that worked, things that didn’t work, pitfalls that we hope you steer clear of and a list of questions for you and your community to consider as you move forward.

OUR STORY AS A HOME CHURCH

In 2018, we opened our home to gather and began what would eventually be called, “Friday Night Light.” We had no clue what we were doing or how it was going to play out, but we felt the Lord prompting us to train and equip his children, so that’s what we did. Here is how we structured our gatherings, but each community will have to feel this out and listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to determine what works best on a case-by-case level.

OUR GATHERINGS

It began by my wife and I praying throughout the week and listening to the Spirit speak to us as to what the group needed. Sometimes we would show up with a word ready to go, and other times we would sit and wait for Father to speak to us, literally as the people gathered in our living room. I believe the latter was to bolster our faith as leaders and to learn to rely on and trust the Holy Spirit to lead and guide our gatherings, which proved to be invaluable for us!

We would typically open with prayer, sometimes we would sing songs of praise and worship to the Father, other times we would dive right in to teaching, and sometimes we would use the evening as a place to confess our sins, repent, or grow in our wholeness ([shalom](#)) with the Lord. And, when needed, we would do spiritual warfare on behalf of the afflicted to bring immediate comfort or [deliverance](#) to the individuals.

As the group matured in faith, the Lord led us to [1 Corinthians 14:26](#) to structure our gatherings, where it stated: *“When you conduct your meetings, you should always let everything be done to build up the church family. Whether you share a song of praise, a teaching, a divine revelation, or a tongue and interpretation, let each one contribute what strengthens others.”*

Once the group was equipped, it grew into a place where others would practice the gifts of the Spirit and would begin using their God-given strengths to minister to each other. Some were equipped in healing, others in prophecy, some were skilled at teaching and would lead the group, and some would share a divine revelation with the group from what they received during their time in the secret place with the Lord. The goal was to equip the saints, then sit back and watch them use what they have learned, and we recommend you do the same.

Most of our meetings ended by someone praying for the whole group, and then turning it over to personal ministry: where we would pray for healings; share prophetic words to strengthen, encourage, or comfort one another; and sometimes we would move to a private room for confessions or personal stories that needed private prayers.

The goal was simple, we taught others what we learned from our journeys and then got out of the way so others could grow, and then go. We made it a point to make our ceiling, their floor. Each group is different, so play with what works best for you and your group.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

WHO SHOULD GATHER?

[2 Corinthians 1:3-5](#) basically says that we comfort with the comfort we have been comforted with. Said another way, our ministry is often birthed out of the misery that God rescued us from. For me, I was a former drug addict, alcoholic, and atheist; and wouldn't you believe it, the Lord brought addicts, alcoholics, and atheists to our home in droves! Our first gathering was with 4 people who were battling addictions that I met in public and invited them to our house. They received comfort and healing from the Father, and you guessed it...they began telling others. Shortly thereafter, our house was like an AA meeting, stuffed to the gills with many hurting and lost sheep who needed to find the Good Shepherd.

We had an open-door policy at first, but after many Friday nights of praying and doing spiritual warfare into early Saturday morning, we began to shift our focus. We moved from an evangelistic gathering and into a strategic apostolic gathering where we would train and equip future leaders of home churches. We advertised that these meetings were for those looking to lead their own home church, and sure enough, the numbers went from 40 to 12 in a blink of an eye.

So, who should gather in your house church? Well, it depends on who the Lord wants you to minister to and what he is calling you to do, so pray and listen to the Lord as he leads your gatherings and be willing to adapt when He tells you to do so.

WHAT SHOULD WE COVER?

We never once strayed from the bible, and oftentimes, we only covered what the Spirit was leading us to cover. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," ([Romans 10:17](#)) so we preached His word in order to grow our faith. Then, we grew in wisdom by not just hearing the teachings of Christ, but by putting them into practice ([Matthew 7:24-27](#)). At Kingdom Learners, our ministry is built upon [Colossians 1:28-29](#), "Christ is our message! We preach to awaken hearts and bring every person into the full understanding of truth," thus, we never strayed from teaching the revelation of Jesus as both Lord and Savior.

We would also cover our home before and after every meeting. What does that mean? We would come together as a family and would pray over our home asking God to watch over us, we would pray to bring His manifest presence and power to our meetings, and we would pray for all who would enter our home before they would arrive. *Furthermore, we employed a team of prayer warriors to intercede for us as we gathered each week, and we recommend you do the same.* In addition to this, we later learned that it was extremely important to pray over our home after people would leave. We quickly recognized that people are carriers for both spiritual blessings, and spiritual curses. We soon discovered that highly demonized people would gather in our homes, and, as a parting gift, they would leave some residue behind in our home, so we would not go to bed until either my wife or I would command all unclean spirits to leave our home in the name of Jesus (for more info, click [here](#)).

At some point along the way, people began to become curious about baptism, salvation, and other theological tenets of the bible. So, we filled our bathtub and baptized dozens of people in our home. Then came questions about being baptized by fire, and being baptized in the Holy Spirit, so we taught about that and welcomed others to participate. Then came spiritual gifts and impartations, and others joined in that. The goal is to let these things arise organically, and not force them upon others. The inquisitive nature of humans will lead them to want the things of the kingdom as they are exposed to them, so let this happen at a natural rate – don't force it.

It is so important to let God lead this, and as the group evolves (and trust me, it will) trust God as he transforms your plans and advances your house church. At one point our group was too big for our home, so God instructed us to pull the hungry off to the side and offer an additional night of the week to equip and launch them to lead their own house church. At one time, we felt prompted to start a Wednesday night gathering for those who wanted to grow at a deeper level, and we began a Wholeness and Inner Healing Group for them. Things will change. People will come and go. Ideas will rise and fall like the tides of the ocean. The best advice we can give you is this: teach Christ, let Him be the head of your gatherings, and never stray from the perfect word and will of God.

We strongly encourage you to use this time to dive into God's word and if you are struggling to get started, we invite you to look at our [Daily Word](#) for material to consider; of, if you are up to the challenge, take your small group through one of our [Courses](#). All our material is free and open to the public, so check it out at kingdomlearners.com to help get you started.

The bottom line is this, God is in charge, so trust Him as he steers the group.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us at info@kingdomlearners.com

WHEN AND WHERE DO WE GATHER?

We gathered every Friday night from 7:00pm-11:00pm in our living room.

At first, we didn't know any better and would allow people to stay as long as they wanted. Our early gatherings would last until 1:00am or later, and our entire Saturdays would end up being a mess. After months of misery, we learned a few things: (1) it is extremely important to pray over our home before people arrive and after they leave, because we are all carriers of spirits, some Holy and some unclean. (2) We learned the importance of taking a Sabbath every Saturday. (3) We learned to put a time limit on our meetings and would encourage people to reach out during the following week if they had questions or needed prayer. (4) We learned the importance of setting healthy boundaries.

On rare occasions, we would go out of town or have a family obligation and would have to either cancel a meeting or invite another member to host the gathering at their house. Each group is different, so you will need to feel this one out.

FOR YOU TO DETERMINE

Below is a list of questions, concerns, issues, etc. that we had to face along the way. Feel free to look over this list when planning and organizing your own house church.

CHILDREN

Will there be children in attendance? If so, will there be someone who can watch the children while you gather? How many children will be in attendance and is there an age requirement?

CHILDREN

We tried it all. Kids. No Kids. We even tried hiring a sitter to watch the kids. It may work better with a no kid policy or put an age requirement and restriction on the number of children who come.

FOOD & DRINKS

Will you provide food and drinks? If so, will you as the host prepare all food and drinks or will you allow others to bring dishes? Who will provide plasticware, napkins, cups, coffee, creamer, sugar, etc.? Who will be responsible for cleaning it up? Does this fall on the host, or does everyone pitch in and help? If the host family provides food and drink, do others offer money to offset the costs?

FOOD & DRINKS

At first, we offered food and drinks to everyone, then we invited others to bring food and drinks, and then it just became a distraction. We ended up offering coffee and water, with an occasional batch of cookies because my wife knows of my sweet tooth. As for donations, we rarely asked. Others saw all that we did, and they began to pitch in and help and offered money to offset the costs.

WHO WILL GATHER?

What is the mission of your group? Are you gathering to grow in knowledge and wisdom? Or are you gathering to fellowship? Will there be any outreach or missional work with your group? How many people are you targeting? Will there be a policy on who can attend? Can others invite their friends and family? Will you need to vet them out first or just trust the discretion of your group members?

WHO WILL GATHER?

As mentioned above, we started with a come as you are mentality, and quickly had to shift our focus to a more intentional group aimed at discipleship. We moved from an evangelizing group of 40 down to an apostolic focus of equipping about a dozen or so. We allowed others to invite their friends at first, and then realized that we should probably vet them out since this is our home and not a public space. This can be tricky, so we encourage you to pray about it.

FREQUENCY OF GATHERINGS

Will you meet every week? Every other week? Will you have remote meetings (zoom) if need be? Will there be one host, or will your group rotate from house to house?

FREQUENCY OF GATHERINGS

We met almost every Friday in our home, and during quarantine, we met via zoom. We hosted nearly every meeting and tried the rotating house idea, but it did not work very well (could've been group dynamics, maturity levels, timing, etc.)

FOR YOU TO DETERMINE

COMMUNICATION

How will you communicate with your group? Will you call each individual when there is an issue or a change of plans? Will you start an email or text chain? Do you plan on offering daily words of encouragement to the group, or will someone in your gatherings be equipped to handle this?

COMMUNICATION

We found it very useful to create a “messenger thread” to communicate with our group. We sent reminders, invited them to ministry opportunities we would attend or lead, and tried to send frequent words of encouragement. Feel free to share our [Daily Word](#) with your group to keep them fed.

HANDLING ISSUES

Unlike a corporate gathering in a church, these meetings are personal, vulnerable, transparent, and can bump up against some tender places of life. How will your group handle offenses? What will you do if a member is upset and wants to raise a complaint? What will you do if someone in your group is unruly and seems to periodically derail your meetings?

HANDLING ISSUES

We handled all issues with a [Matthew 18 approach](#), and brought it up right away with the offended person—in a private setting. On rare occasions we had to dismiss people from the group because they were a distraction. It is important to handle matters right away, speaking the truth in love, and to be gently with your flock. Don’t let the issues linger, or they will spread like mold and can infect the group.

OFFERINGS

Will you take up an offering? Will you expect others to assist with the unseen costs of coffee, filters, cream, sugar, toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, plates, etc.? Who will oversee the collection? Will this be private or public knowledge? How will the money be used?

OFFERINGS

We rarely asked others for money. Some saw to it on their own to offer money to help offset the costs. My wife balanced the finances for our home church, and we used the money purchase coffee, cream, plates, toilet paper, etc. Sometimes we used the money to send members to other trusted ministries for deliverance and inner healing.

For all other items that may arise, feel free to contact us (info@kingdomlearners.com) you’re your questions or concerns and we will get back to you at our earliest convenience.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guide and for considering being a host to welcome the presence of God's Spirit into your home as you gather to worship and serve Him.

We would like to pray for you, bless you, and answer your questions, so do not hesitate to contact us at info@kingdomlearners.com should you need any assistance.

OUR PRAYER FOR YOU

Heavenly Father, we ask that you cover the homes of all who agree to serve you with their house church. We ask that you protect the marriages involved in this mission and that you send your angels to watch over any children who may gather in these homes. Our prayer is that these gatherings would equip others to bear much fruit in your kingdom, and that you would receive ALL the glory. Our prayer is that YOUR will be done in the lives of all who gather to grow and mature into the kings and priests that you have called us all to be. Your word says to ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers into the harvest field, because it is plentiful (Luke 10:2). So Father, we are asking that you would send workers to create home churches, to build into the lives of others, to strengthen and feed those who hunger for you, to equip the saints for works of ministry, and to transform the lives of those who gather to serve you. Please Lord, do a mighty work in all the homes that gather to praise you and serve you. We ask all of these things in the mighty and matchless name of your Son and our Savior—Jesus Christ.

A BLESSING FOR YOU

Dear fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, we bless you being servants of the Most High God. We bless you in acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. We bless you and your family in being supernaturally protected by Father and His angel army. We bless you in loving your neighbor in such a way that it inspires an entire community to be transformed into the image of Christ. We bless you in being the salt of the earth and light of the world. We bless you in perseverance, in not giving up the good fight that you have been chosen for. We bless you in living a life worthy of the calling you have received. We bless all who gather in your homes that they would be immediately filled with holy reverence towards the Lord and be eager to serve Him. We bless you in being faithful stewards to all that God has entrusted you with. We bless you in the wisdom and discernment of Solomon, the leadership of Moses, the patience of Job, the boldness of Joshua, the fearlessness of Elijah, the resolve of Daniel, the courage of Esther, and the heart of Jesus Christ. We bless you in going forth and making many disciples!