

SHARE A MEAL



PRAY TOGETHER



BUILD COMMUNITY

Gathering Guide HOUSE



PARTIES



Gathering Guide

UMATILLA COUNTY



HERMISTON



STATE OF OREGON

HOUSE PARTIES Gathering Guide

WHY HOUSE PARTIES?

At ZEAL Church, we believe that the Church is one family with many expressions. Church is not confined to a one hour gathering on a Sunday but truly thrives when faith becomes a daily walk. House Parties exist to create an environment and space where Christ-followers can come together during the week to be encouraged, take communion, pray for one another, share a meal, and build deep relationships. We also believe this is a space where those that are simply curious about God or have yet to put their faith in Him can come to ask questions and find the same community that we as believers have the privilege of experiencing through our relationship with Jesus. These home gatherings are just as, if not more important than, the Sunday experience. They are the evidence of God moving in our lives and Sunday is a celebration of all He is doing every single day in our cities, homes, and families. Are you ready to take the journey?

WHAT ARE HOUSE PARTIES?

A family or group of friends gathering in their homes to encounter Jesus was one of the foundational expressions of faith amongst members in the earliest forms of the Christian church. Today, it is still a life-changing practice that provides believers with a means of stepping into their God-given positions as the priests of their homes. In every respect, gathering together in our daily lives with a small group of family and friends is as significant and powerful as any large gathering at a church building. When we gather in faith and love in our homes – it is a supernatural demonstration (*Ps. 133; Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42-47*).

Throughout the centuries, in times of persecution or when Christians were unable to gather in large congregations, the practice of breaking bread and engaging Scripture in homes is what has allowed God's people to endure any hardship. House Parties consist of sharing a meal, taking communion, declaring and reading the Scripture, praying over one another, and intentionally building relationships.

HOUSE PARTIES INCLUDE:

SHARING A MEAL

COMMUNION

READING SCRIPTURE

PRAYING OVER ONE ANOTHER

BUILDING COMMUNITY

ZEAL

SHARE A MEAL

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PRAY TOGETHER

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BUILD COMMUNITY

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STEP BY STEP GATHERING GUIDE

ITEMS NEEDED:

Candle.

During the meal, the candle represents Jesus as the light of the world. When you light the candle, you are recognizing that he is the light of the world and inviting his presence into your home.

Grape Juice.

Juice represents the blood of Jesus.

Bread or Crackers.

In Jewish tradition, these dinners use either challah (a braided egg bread) or matzah (a large, unleavened cracker), though any bread will do. The bread or cracker in this meal represents the body of Jesus.

Cup for Communion.

Depending on the situation, a single cup or many cups can be used.

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1. PRAYER OF WELCOME & CANDLE LIGHTING (APPROX. 2 MINUTES)

The leader(s) or other chosen person lights the candles as a demonstration to welcome the presence of Jesus into the home. The table prays the Lord's Prayer together.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." (Matthew 6:9-13)

Declaration from leader(s):

"Almighty God, we welcome your presence into our home and we thank you for this day of rest. We thank you that you have set apart this day to meet with us. By your Word, you have sanctified and commanded us to be a light to our world. And above all we thank you for Jesus, our Messiah, the light of the world."

Response from table:

"Jesus, we thank you." Or "Amen"

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2. DINNER

This meal is flexible. It can be either a potluck style or prepared by the leader.

After the prayer of welcome and candle lighting, you may proceed to dinner. You may also wish to close in a personal prayer of thanks or pray a closing prayer such as:

"Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and forever will be. Amen."

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3. READING OF THE SCRIPTURE (APPROX. 2 MINUTES)

The leader or someone at the table can read the following Scripture:

"Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

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4. COMMUNION (APPROX. 5 MINUTES)

Revelation 3:20 reminds us that Jesus stands at the door and knocks, he tells us that if we invite him in, he will eat with us. When we partake in communion, we are demonstrating the supernatural act of inviting the presence of Jesus into our homes and we recognize that he is literally present with us in the meal. Communion is also a prophetic anticipation of the return of King Jesus when he will establish his eternal kingdom and we will partake with him in the marriage supper of the Lamb.

As you get ready to lead communion and eat the bread, read:

"While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.'" (Matthew 26:26)

Jesus' Body (the bread): the leader(s) lifts the bread and prays:

"Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. We thank you, Lord Jesus, for your body that was given for us and given unto us so that we can be whole."

After this declaration, the bread may be served and everyone may eat the bread.

As you get ready to drink the juice, read:

"And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.'" (Matthew 26:27-28)

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4. COMMUNION (APPROX. 5 MINUTES)

Jesus' Blood (the juice): the leader(s) lifts the cup and prays:

"Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the universe, who brings forth the fruit from the vine. We thank you, Lord Jesus, for your blood of the covenant which was poured out for the removal of all sin."

Response from table:

"Jesus, we thank you." Or "Amen"

After this declaration, everyone may drink the cup.

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5. PRAYER OF BLESSING AND AFFIRMATIONS (APPROX. 5 MINUTES)

Prayer of Blessing from the Leader (Leader(s) lays hands upon and prays a blessing over the group.):

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

Return of Blessing from the Table (Those who were blessed place their hands on the leader(s) and pray aloud):

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

After these blessings/affirmations - take time for personal prayer (share individual needs or prayer requests). In response, have the group take time to lay hands on and/or pray over individuals.

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6. SPEND TIME TOGETHER

This is the time of the evening where deep and intentional relationships are built. This portion of the gathering looks like: facilitating meaningful conversation, playing games, or simply enjoying each other's company. Feel free to lead this time in whatever you feel works best for your group.

A typical House Party gathering should last 2-3 hours depending on the length of dinner and community building. This is a framework for an evening but all gatherings should feel organic and cater to your groups' specific needs.

THE

Future

IS

Family!

