

HOME CHURCH

ECAC Host Guide

August 2020

VISION

THANK YOU

Thanks for your willingness to open your home and create a space where others can come and gather. This kit will offer you some practical tips, how to's and resources to help you as you host. A little bit of the dream and vision of HOME CHURCH first.

ECAC MISSION

We desire to turn people into fully devoted followers of Jesus. Our identity of being a disciple-making church is focused on personal relationships. As such we desire, under Alberta Health Services Cohort & Gathering rules, desire to provide a guide for you to gather as the church on a smaller scale during COVID-19 days. We understand the difficulty some have in doing church online and church is never meant to be simply “watched” but participated in as a community.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. -Acts 2:42-47

What if we started looking like the church in the book of Acts?

MODEL

The Thirds Model

As you read the account of the early church you will have noticed the various elements that, when lived out in community, created a movement of God that was transformative to all.

This does not happen by purely human effort and ingenuity. This is a work of God the Father through the life and sacrifice of His son Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

This also does not happen in one setting or in one week. These groups of neighbours- men, women, children- did life together. They were there for each other in significant ways over time.

When you gather, engage the “Thirds Model”:

- 1/3 to encourage one another with songs and words (Scripture sharing, praying, healing etc during the beginning & song time)
- 1/3 Teaching/application to engage the scriptures & engage in prayer for life transformation (Sermon Time & Challenge)
- 1/3 Discussion/Prayer to help grasp the content and further encourage each other (using the message challenge & life issues)

Home Church Elements

- **Gathering:** *physically gather in a home/backyard/park*
- **Service Premiere/Live Stream** *worship together, engage the sermon*
- **Discussion** *how can you apply this week's teaching, check-in on previous weeks learning*
- **Prayer** *pray for one another, for your community and for our world*
- **Fun** *bonding happens over fun*
- **Eating** *share a meal together*
- **Breaking Bread** *remember Christ's sacrifice in communion Sundays*
- **Meeting Needs** *care for those inside your home church, together serve those outside your home church*

HOW TO

GETTING STARTED

- Pray and ask God who you would like to invite into your home. You may want to invite a couple of people and leave some room for a neighbour to join at another point.
- Invite those in your “Core Cohort” as defined by Alberta Health Services.
- Contact Pastor Brandon (brandon.crain@ecac.ca) for prayer & support.

Tips

- Be flexible: each group is different and so will look different
- Run the service on your TV vs a laptop if possible
- You may need an extra cable to connect your laptop to your TV
- Join in and be active and engaged
- Sing when it's time, pray when it's time.
- Encourage age appropriate worship & activities for kids

Leading A Discussion

- Don't do all the talking – you may also need to help others with that Decide to be comfortable with silence, be a good listener.
- Work to create an environment where all can share if so desired. Don't allow one person to monopolize the time.
- Make relationships primary in importance. In other words, it probably doesn't matter if you go overtime, or if you didn't answer all the questions. It's more important that you listen to and care about each other.

Questions to consider

- What one insight or principle stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?
- How does what was shared connect with other things that you know or are learning about God? What parts may you disagree with or find challenging?
- Consider the text from the sermon
 - Reflecting on these verses, what strikes you most? Why?
 - What is most challenging in these verses? Encouraging? New?
 - If these verses were applied to our culture today, how would it change?
- When and where do you struggle most with what was shared in the sermon?
If you were to incorporate this truth into your own life, how would the next week be different?
- How can we pray for one another regarding this topic?

COVID-19 REGULATIONS

Please check back to alberta.ca for updated information. The following information is provided in stage 2 relaunch in Alberta which allows two different approaches to Home Churches:

First scenario with Strict Health Measures:

- **50 people maximum for indoor social gatherings**, including wedding and funeral receptions and birthday parties
- No cap on the number of people (with public health measures in place) at worship gatherings

Second Scenario with more flexibility:

- A COVID-19 cohort – also known as bubbles, circles, or safe squads – are small groups of the same people who can interact regularly without staying 2 metres apart.
- A person in a cohort should have little to no close contact with people outside of the cohort. Keeping the same people together, rather than mixing and mingling, helps reduce the chance of getting sick, and makes it easier to track exposure if someone does get sick.
- Under Stage 2 of relaunch, core cohorts can include your household and up to 15 other people you spend the most time with and are physically close to.
- This usually includes people part of your regular routine:
 - household members
 - immediate family
 - closest tightknit social circle
 - people you have regular close contact with (co-parent who lives outside the household, a babysitter or caregiver)