



DINNER PARTY GUIDE

"ALL THE BELIEVERS WERE TOGETHER AND HAD EVERYTHING IN COMMON. 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 FAVOR OF ALL THE PEOPLE. AND THE LORD ADDED TO THEIR NUMBER DAILY THOSE WHO WERE BEING SAVED."

ACTS 2:44, 46-47

# VISION

*THE HEART OF FIRST CHURCH DINNER PARTIES IS TO CREATE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT, TALK ABOUT FAITH AND GOD, SHARE A MEAL AND BUILD COMMUNITY.*

**BY BUILDING PEOPLE'S LIVES WE BUILD THE CHURCH.**

## CULTURE POINTS

FOR ALL DINNER  
PARTY LEADERS

- 1 KEEP IT A PARTY**  
LEAVE SPACE FOR RELATIONSHIPS TO FORM,  
MAKE THIS THE HIGHLIGHT OF SOMEONE'S WEEK
- 2 CREATE ATMOSPHERE**  
CANDLES, MUSIC AND LIGHTING ARE KEY TO  
MAKING WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT
- 3 WELCOME PEOPLE**  
HELP PEOPLE CONNECT WITHIN YOUR DINNER  
PARTY AND ALWAYS HAVE EYES FOR NEW PEOPLE  
COMING IN
- 4 OWNERSHIP**  
LAY CLEAR ROLES FOR EACH LEADER SO YOU ARE  
FREE AND EMPOWERED TO WORK AS A TEAM
- 5 COME READY**  
READ, MEDITATE AND STUDY THE MESSAGE  
NOTES FROM SUNDAY

# LEADERSHIP ROLES

## **SUNDAYS**

COME EARLY, THE FIRST 30 MINUTES OF SERVICE ARE INTEGRAL TO CONNECTING AND BUILDING YOUR DINNER PARTY

BE PRESENT AND ENGAGED DURING CHURCH

## **HOSPITALITY**

- Organizing dinner for the group
- Creating a welcoming atmosphere with set up

## **HOST**

- Opening up your home for the group and making the space ready and inviting
- Welcoming people at the door

## **DISCUSSION**

- Leading and directing the group to discuss Sunday's message
- Getting people to share & asking questions to engage others
- Encouraging everyone to be praying and reaching out to include others for Sunday

## **FOLLOW UP**

- Calling and inviting all the new signups each week and continuing to follow up to connect each week
- Reporting on our database each week who attended

*COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ALL LEADERS IS KEY  
TO BUILDING A HEALTHY GROUP*

# HOSPITALITY

## KEYS TO A GREAT MEAL

### **COMMUNICATE**

PLAN MEALS OUT IN ADVANCE. TALK WITH OTHER LEADERS ABOUT THE PLAN FOR THE MONTH THEN COMMUNICATE THE MEAL TO YOUR DINNER PARTY TO HAVE OTHERS GET INVOLVED BY BRINGING A SIDE OR DISH TO COMPLEMENT THE DISH.

### **THEMES ARE KEY**

MAKE IT FUN. HAVE A THEME FOR THE NIGHT THAT HELPS THE MEAL COME TO LIFE AND PEOPLE GET EXCITED FOR THE PARTY ASPECT.

### **CATER TO YOUR FAMILY**

MAKE SURE YOU CHECK FOR ANY DIETARY RESTRICTIONS IN YOUR GROUP, IF SOMEONE IS GLUTEN FREE, VEGAN OR VEGETARIAN YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE OPTIONS AND FOOD FOR ALL.

### **PREP, PREP & PREP**

AVOID FEELING RUSHED BY PREPARING WELL, HAVE THE MEAL MADE AND READY BY THE TIME GUESTS ARE WALKING IN.

### **PRESENTATION**

USE REAL SERVING DISHES AND BOWLS TO DISPLAY THE MEAL IN A GREAT WAY, TRANSFER ANY STORE BOUGHT ITEMS INTO A NICE BOWL TO COMPLETE THE LOOK

## THE MENU

- Create a main dish that is easily added to. Then people can bring sides or complementary items for the dish.
- Go seasonal! Pick fresh items that are in season or festive for fall, winter or summer to make the night fun
- Some of our favorites:

TACO BAR | SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE | CHILI | STIR-FRY  
BBQ ON THE GRILL | BREAKFAST FOR DINNER

# HOST

Opening your home every week creates a consistent, welcoming space for people to gather for dinner party. As a host you are welcoming people into the family.

## TOP TIPS

### **CLEAN HOUSE**

Dinner Party starts on Tuesday. Clean and be ready for guests coming on Wednesday night.

### **ATMOSPHERE SET**

Have music playing, candles set up and designated areas for coats and bags before people walk in so the area is well presented.

### **TALK WITH YOUR ROOMMATES**

If you are starting off hosting always have the pre-conversations with your roommates to make sure hosting every week is good to go

### **HONOR YOUR GUESTS**

Make sure everyone feels comfortable in the space; clear people's plates and help clean up the area before everyone gets settled for discussion

## HAVE A BACK UP

IF YOU ARE TRAVELING FOR A WEEK OR ARE SICK,  
HAVE A PLAN B WITH YOUR DINNER PARTY LEADERS  
OF WHERE DINNER PARTY COULD BE HOSTED SO THAT  
YOU ARE NEVER SCRAMBLING

# DISCUSSION

## PURPOSE

TO BUILD PEOPLE  
UP THROUGH GOD'S  
WORD



TO LIVE OUT AND  
APPLY SUNDAY'S  
MESSAGE TO OUR  
DAILY LIVES BY  
POINTING PEOPLE  
TO CHRIST

The time of discussion during Dinner Parties creates a safe, welcoming space where people can share and be heard, listen to others and grow together. God's heart is for us to share life with others and commune with one another.

## PREPARATION

### BE EXPECTANT ON SUNDAYS

- Listen to what God is sharing with you personally during the message, these are the keys of connecting the message to your life first - then it will flow out to others.
- Take good notes on Sundays during the message.

### MESSAGE NOTES

- Read over notes sent out on Tuesdays.
- Re-read key passages of scripture.
- Pray over the message and the individuals in your Dinner Party to have a revelation from the message.

### TALK WITH YOUR LEADERS

- Share with each other what you got out of the message and what you want to talk about.
- Review your RSVPs. This helps to read the atmosphere of your group - is it lots of new people, regulars, small or big?

# DURING THE NIGHT

## **GAUGE THE ATMOSPHERE**

Is the group big or small? If it is a larger group discussion works better splitting up into two groups to help more people engage in the conversation.

## **SET A TIME FRAME**

Honor the people in the room and have a set time goal of when you want to start and end discussion. We suggest 1 hour of dinner and connecting and 1 hour of discussion and prayer to balance the night.

## **HAVE A GAME PLAN**

Pick a few key scriptures/points from the message to dig deeper into rather than just skimming through the whole message. Have questions ready to build on each other.

## **BREAK WALLS DOWN**

Warm up the room if necessary when you start the discussion with a fun question, opening in prayer, introducing yourself, or sharing the history of the Dinner Party and purpose of the night.



# DISCUSSION

## KEYS TO REMEMBER

### **1 ENGAGE**

Ask questions that are open for everyone to answer. Don't spend too much time talking yourself.

### **2**

#### **REDIRECT**

As the leader of the group, feel confident to redirect the conversation with another question or thought if it gets too off topic from the heart of the message.

### **3**

#### **BE FLEXIBLE**

Let God into the room; pray during the night and for the people in the room, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead you. If the night didn't hit an expectation don't feel it is on you. Keep the focus on pointing people to Jesus and building the church.

### **4**

#### **PRAYER**

End the night strong in prayer. Having people either break off and pray in groups or as a big group asking for prayer requests and praise reports. Create a culture during the week to be praying for the requests from the Dinner Party and checking in on how they are doing.

# FOLLOW UP

## PURPOSE

### TO CONNECT AND PLANT PEOPLE IN THE HOUSE

Follow up and connection build and establish people in God's House. We have a heart for the one because of God's heart for us.

"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Philippians 2:4

## STEPS

**1**

### PRAY FIRST

Pray for people by name and ask God by His Spirit to plant them and establish them, He will anoint our efforts and work in partnership with us. We will be less burnt out about follow up if we pray first then step out in faith as we go through these steps

**2**

### CALL & CONNECT

In the next page there is an outline of what a week looks like following up and connecting someone new at church

**3**

### REPORTING

Use our database to report every week by Thursday afternoon who came to your Dinner Party.

# WEEKLY TIMELINE

## MONDAY

### WELCOME CALL

On Mondays during the day, all the new people who signed up for your Dinner Party are added into trello. Give each person a welcome call to connect and invite this week to Dinner Party.

## TUESDAY

### WELCOME CALL

If you weren't able to get in touch with someone on Monday, call and connect with them on Tuesday, and follow up with a text if you only get a voicemail.

## SEND INVITES TO WHOLE DP

Contact all members of your Dinner Party with clear details for Wednesday through email, whatsapp, or text make sure everyone has the details and feels invited

## SUNDAY

### WELCOME & CONNECT

- Did they make it back to church?
- Introduce and meet new people who you have been in contact with
- Connect them with other people at church and either sit with them or get them connected with someone to sit with if they are alone
- First 30 minutes of church is the most important time to meet new people and get them connected

# WEEKLY TIMELINE

## WEDNESDAY

### FOLLOW UP

Send out “see you tonight” texts or reconnect to remind and encourage new people to come along

### AT DINNER PARTY

- Already have someone in mind you can connect a new person with in your dinner party
- Make sure the new person feels included and welcomed during the night
- Connect with them yourself so you can continue to reach out in an authentic way

## THURSDAY

### THANK YOU!

Send thank yous to new people that came along to keep building the relationship and connection.

## FRIDAY & SATURDAY

Send invites back to church this Sunday!

FOLLOW UP IS ABOUT REMEMBERING THAT IT IS INDIVIDUALS WHO MAKE UP THE PARTY. CELEBRATE WITH THOSE WHO COME EACH WEEK AND REMEMBER THE ONES WHO DIDN'T PRAYING, ENCOURAGING & SEEKING AFTER THOSE WHO ARE NOT YET PLANTED.

# PHONE CALL

## ETIQUETTE

- Be welcoming and professional.
- Make the conversation intentional, they want to get connected with you.
- Don't call past 8:30pm.
- If you get a voicemail, leave a message and send a text to connect.

## THANK THEM FOR COMING

Introduce yourself as First Church Dinner Party Leader in your neighborhood and thank them for coming to church.

## FIND OUT MORE

If the conversation is flowing, find out more and start building the relationship with them

## GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- How did you hear about First Church? What service did you attend?
- How long have you been in the Houston area? If they are new to the area, this is a great way to connect and help them feel at home.
- What do they do in the city? College student? Parent? Industry? - Things to discover to help see how to connect them with others in your group

## INVITE TO DINNER PARTY

Clear invite to Dinner Party this week with details of time and location.

Lay the foundation for the night:

- Share a meal together and get to know people in our neighborhood
- Discuss Sunday's message and connect it to our lives
- Time of prayer and encouragement

## PRAY

Ask if they have any prayer needs in that moment and pray for them over the phone if they conversation leads to it.

## NEED HELP?

Staff oversight is here to help with things come up. Whether they came once or never came back, never responded to your call or you just have a question - reach out!