garden assembly
CHURCH

HOME CHURCH GUIDE

Home Church is an intimate gathering of believers meeting in homes across the city to worship, pray, read scripture, take communion, and develop authentic relationships. Below is a guide to help make your engagement and (for the leaders) facilitation more meaningful, effective, and fruitful.

VISION

- Building one another's faith at tables and in living rooms, through celebration, conversation and confession, culminating in the Lord's Supper.
    - Acts 2:46 - So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.

CELEBRATION

- Collectively rejoice in the goodness of God, victory of Jesus, and power of the Holy Spirit, both in our lives and the lives of those around us.
    - Psalm 40:9-10 - I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O Lord, You Yourself know. I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly.

- It is often best to do this as a large group, so everyone can be encouraged by it.
    - Examples
        - Corporate singing & prayer (songs via youtube or live music)
        - Share insights and impact from the sermon series
        - Share testimonies of God's goodness, and how He has been moving in people's Community Groups

CONVERSATION

- Communication that goes beyond the surface and is centered around the things of God, for the purpose of building meaningful, God-glorifying relationships.
    - 1 Corinthians 14:26 - What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

- It is often best to do this in smaller groups, so everyone has a chance to share and receive prayer.
    - Examples
        - High points and low points of life in the last month
        - Ask about monthly fast and spiritual growth plan
        - Pray for one another

CONFESSION

- Admitting our sin to a brother or sister, for the purpose of repentance, prayer, healing, and cleansing.
    - James 5:16 - Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.
    - 2 Corinthians 7:10 - For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.
    - 1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- How to Receive Confession of Sin (3 Ws, 2 Ps)
    - **WAIT (and listen)**
        - Thank them for sharing, and *listen together* for anything God wants to say about the matter. After a time of listening, share what either of you believe the Lord might have said.
            - Psalm 40:1-2 - I waited patiently for the Lord; He inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

- **WHAT**
  - What were the *factors* that led to the sin?
    - Ps. 73:2-3 - But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
  - What did it *cost* you?
    - Luke 7:30 - But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.
  - What are you *going to do* so that it doesn't happen again?
    - Matthew 18:9 - And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

- **WHO/ WHOM**
  - Who *can help* (practical help, accountability, etc.)?
    - Ecclesiastes 4:9-11 - Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!
  - Who do you need to *ask for forgiveness*?
    - Matthew 5:23-24 - So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.
  - To whom do you need to make *restitution*?
    - Leviticus. 6:2-5 - If anyone sins and commits a breach of faith against the Lord by deceiving his neighbor in a matter of deposit or security, or through robbery, or if he has oppressed his neighbor or has found something lost and lied about it, swearing falsely—in any of all the things that people do and sin thereby— if he has sinned and has realized his guilt and will restore what he took by robbery or what he got by oppression or the deposit that was committed to him or the lost thing that he found or anything about which he has sworn falsely, he shall restore it in full and shall add a fifth to it, He shall give it to the one to whom it belongs on the day he presents his guilt offering.

- **PRAY**
  - Follow the Spirit and *pray for whatever is fitting*–cleansing, freedom, deliverance, inner healing, etc.
    - James 5:16 - Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.
- **PARTNER**
  - Help provide *supportive accountability* to help them take the steps you discussed.
    - Proverbs 27:17 - As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.
  - For example, you may not be the person they identified as an accountability partner, but you can support them by ensuring they reach out to that person.

- WHERE TO START
  - Confession is best done in the context of relationships
  - In situations where trust and relationship has yet to be established, a good starting point is to review a section of scripture from which individuals can share their shortcomings and receive prayer for grace. Examples include the 10 Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, Romans 12, and Colossians 3.

END WITH THE LORD'S SUPPER

- Take the Lord's Supper together as a tangible experience of the Lord's presence, and as a recognition of the price that was paid for all of the blessings and forgiveness we've received.
  - Matthew 26:26-28 - And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

- BASIC STEPS
  - Read aloud one of the the following passages:
    - Isaiah 53:1-12: The suffering of Christ foretold
    - Matthew 26:26-30: Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper.
    - John 6:53-57: Jesus promises to give life to all who consume His body and blood.

        - 1 Corinthians 11:23-30: Paul warns us to approach the Lord's Supper with reverence so we are not disciplined by God.
    - Reflect on the passage (e.g. share an insight, openly discuss, etc.). This can be something very short.
    - Give space for people to silently meditate on the passage and examine themselves (see 1 Corinthians 11:23-30).
    - Once you are ready, receive the bread and the cup of the Lord.
        - You can use unleavened bread and grape juice, or use prepackaged Communion cups, like in church.
            - Unleavened bread can be purchased at most grocery stores, and Communion cups can be purchased online.
    - Take your time, and end in prayer.

EXAMPLE SCHEDULE

- Celebration: Singing, sharing, and testimonies (Large group, 30-40 minutes)
- Conversation: Highs and lows, spiritual growth, prayer (Smaller groups, 30-40 minutes)
- Confession: Confessing sin (Pairs or triads, 25-30 minutes)
- The Lord's Supper: Read, reflect, receive (Large group, 20-25 minutes)
- *Total: 110-135 minutes*