

Starting a House Church

No matter what method you choose for starting a house church, be sure that your motives for starting the group are healthy. If you're starting a house church because you're frustrated with other churches, you're probably going to find yourself dealing with the same unresolved issues and dissatisfaction later. Not to mention, remember that sowing and reaping are spiritual laws. We will often multiply our own issues to others and then experience what it's like to be on the receiving end. Healthy reasons for starting a house church are mission-based, relationship-based, and humility-based.

- ❖ **Mission-based motives** are those that recognize we have a Gospel to share, and there's a world that desperately needs to hear it. This motivation is focused on obedience to Jesus' command to make disciples for Him.
- ❖ **Relationship-based motives** are proven through well-maintained friendships with those who previously taught you in Christ or have invested in your spiritual growth. Start your house church with the blessing of whatever church you previously attended, and remain in contact with the leader of your sending church. They want to hear what God is doing through you, and they still care about what's happening in your life. You may even consider remaining in that church—at least for a time—so that you have solid people with whom you can discuss the challenges you're facing as you try to lead your own house church.
- ❖ **Humility-based motives** recognize that we're not perfect, we don't have all the answers, our theology is not better than everyone else's, and our goal is to serve others. Leading a house church isn't a high position in an organizational pyramid—it's a low position of investing your life in the spiritual growth of other people. It will likely mean late-nights, long phone calls, and lots of frustration. Don't do it so you can shine; do it so you can serve others and help them shine.

House churches are generally planted in one of four ways:

- ❖ **Disciple-based Method.** This is the easiest way to start a house church. You simply begin with two or three other believers and start meeting like any other group. Then you invite others—whether they're already Christians or people you introduced to Jesus for the first time. As with every method, make your target unchurched people.
- ❖ **Evangelistic Method.** This is harder than the previous method, but in some ways can be more rewarding. Lead somebody to Jesus, and start meeting regularly with that person. After a couple weeks, talk to them about starting a house church, and start inviting other people to meet with you. The new believer will likely still have a lot of contacts in the world, and this could lead to rapid growth of your group.
- ❖ **Cross-Cultural Method.** This is less common because we typically live within our own culture. But you may sense the Lord calling you to minister to a different demographic—perhaps an immigrant population, a seniors-home, a college, or something similar. The best thing to do is to make a friend within that demographic. If that person is a Christian, great! If not, lead them to Jesus. Be yourself, but focus your evangelistic efforts on the felt needs of the people you're trying to reach.
- ❖ **Creative Method.** This is any other method you happen to think of!