



Dinner for 8 is a process which is designed...

- To build a greater sense of community among members of the congregation;
- To provide the opportunity for congregational members to discuss (in a small group setting) their lives and ministry possibilities;
- To help participants grow in their understanding of the Church and its' ministries and assist with the development of a process whereby members can see their role in the life and work of the congregation.

Methodology

- Each month for a period of ___ months (a minimum of six months), a group of 6-8 adults meet on a regularly monthly basis for a meal, fellowship, and conversation. The meal can be in someone's home or at a restaurant; however, if a meal is planned to occur at a restaurant, arrangements will need to be made to provide space for semi-private conversation.
- Each month, two people in each group of eight will be responsible for the following:
 - ⇒ Coordinate arrangements for the monthly event; e.g. secure a meeting place; make food arrangements; make child care arrangements if needed, etc.
 - ⇒ Notify group members about the details for the event (by phone and/or by e-mail)
 - ⇒ Lead the table prayer
 - ⇒ Facilitate the conversation surrounding the topic of the month
 - ⇒ Announce to the group who is charge of next month's event; when and where it will be held

Sample Agenda (90-120 min.)

6:00 p.m. Meet at name of location for dinner, fellowship and conversation
Table Prayer
Highs & Lows / Topic of the Month/Questions
Closing Prayer
Announcements

Sample Table Prayers



- Give us grateful hearts, O God, for all your mercies, and make us mindful of the needs of others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
- Bless, O Lord, your gifts to our use and us to your service; for Christ's sake. Amen.
- Every good and perfect gift comes from you, O God. Bless this food, and help us to receive it with thankful hearts. By your Spirit nourish our love for one another and for our neighbor in need; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.
- Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
- May your gifts refresh us, O God, and your grace give us strength, now and forever. Amen.
- We give you thanks, O God, through Jesus Christ, for all your benefits. Bless us and this food, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Highs & Lows



Invite each person around the table to share with the group their "highs and lows". A "high" is a "good" or "positive" experience that recently happened to them. A "low" is a "bad" or "negative" experience that recently happened. People are welcome to share as much or as little as they are willing. The purpose of the "highs and lows" is to help build community and compassion for one another.

Sample Topic of the Month

Month: **Getting to Know You**

1

Go around the table and have each person answer the following questions. Participants are invited to share as much or as little as they are willing to share. Respect the wishes of others if, for some reason, they are not willing or able to share.

- Where did you grow up? What was it like for you?
- Describe your family. What are some of the values that have guided you throughout your life?
- What people have served as “faith models” for you? What did they do that made them special?
- If you could make the world a better place, what would you do?
- Where do you find joy in life?

Month: **Sharing with Others**

2

- Describe a time when someone shared something with you that you wanted and/or needed? Did they share willingly or reluctantly with you?
- What is something that you could (or would) share with others?
- If you received \$50 million, what would you do with it?
- What lesson about sharing would you like everyone to know and live out?
- When was the last time that you felt “blessed”?

Month: **Engaging in Mission**

3

- What does the congregation’s mission statement mean to you?
- How would you explain God’s mission to someone who has never been involved in a church?
- Read Luke 4:18-19:
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” In what ways do you do these things?
- What one thing are you willing to do that will improve the quality of life for someone (other than a family member or friend)?
- What person has had the biggest impact on your life? What did they do?

Month: **Helping Others**

4

- Describe a time when you had to rely on someone else for help. How did they help you?
- What is your reaction to “panhandlers” or those on a street corner asking for financial assistance?
- What criteria do you use to determine whether or not a person’s needs are authentic? What causes you to help someone in need? What causes you to withhold help from someone in need?
- Can you identify a person (or a group of people) to whom you are willing to give assistance?
- What do you think your church should do in order to help more people? (Please include specific actions as well as specific people).

Month: **Improving the Church**

5

- What do you like most about our congregation?
- What one thing would make our church even better than it already is?
- What does our church need in order for newcomers to be attracted to it?
- As the congregation develops a reputation in the community, for what would you like the Church to be known?
- What are you willing to do in order to make the church GREAT?

Month: **Getting the Word Out**

6

- When was the last time that you spoke positively/enthusiastically to someone about our church? What did you say?
- Identify someone you know who is **not** actively involved in a Church. How might they be blessed by our Church?
- How is God at work in our congregation? What is God doing?
- Who are the people who help you to grow in your faith? Who do you know who would benefit from knowing those same people?
- If you can recommend a restaurant, a movie or a book to someone; to whom might you recommend our congregation? What about our congregation excites you?

Sample Closing Prayers



- Thank you, Lord, for the time that we have shared—for the food, the fellowship and the conversation. Go with us as we depart from this place to serve you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
- O God, give us grace to set a good example to all among whom we live, to be just and true in all our dealings, to be gracious and generous and courteous toward all; so that the mind of Jesus may be formed in us and that all may know that we are his disciples; in whose name we pray. Amen.
- Almighty God, your Holy Spirit equips the church with a rich variety of gifts. Grant that we may use them to bear witness to Christ in lives that are built on faith and love. Make us ready to live the gospel and eager to do your will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.
- Bless, O Lord, with the Spirit's grace and presence those with whom we have shared this day. Keep us steadfast in faith and united in love, that we may manifest your glory and prepare the way of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.
- Heavenly Father, we pray that you would send your Holy Spirit upon us, that, as we are guided by your word, we may plan and do things that will be for the good of your church and the glory of your name; in Christ's name we pray. Amen.
- Gracious God, we thank you for the ways that you are at work in our lives and we ask that you bless and preserve us. Give us a clear vision of your will and your mission, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

At the close of each monthly session, participants may form a circle, join hands and close with the Lord's Prayer.