

River Table Groups

River Table Groups are designed to create an intimate relational and spiritual environment with a minimum of organizational energy. Centering around simple shared practices and an intergenerational table fellowship, River Table Groups are meant to create an inclusive spiritual formation rhythm for everyone. If you have children, River Table Groups may be for you—they create room for children to participate and to play alongside...perhaps without outside supervision (depending on ages and temperaments). Given their intimacy, River Table Groups are agile—allowing each River Table Group to attend a semester group each year for connection with others and the wider church body.

How do you get involved in a River Table Group?

Find a few friends or another family and gather. Meet weekly (if at all possible), and have one of member take on the role of “Gatherer.” Don’t stress. It’s simple. The Gatherer is just the person in the group who initiates the regular practices each meeting, maintains open lines of communication with River staff, and if the group’s gatherings begin to become irregular, steps in to re-focus the group.

To assist you, we have provided a sample schedule to follow. Take a look. And may the presence of Jesus be with you as you gather to seek God and fellowship with one another.

5:45pm Gather at someone’s home

6pm Everyone (kids, if any, included) around table for Prayer

- Perhaps a complete-the-sentence prayer... “I saw God today in _____” “Thank You God for _____” As many as like can add their piece before the Gatherer gives an Amen.

Dinner could be prepared by a different family each time or could be potluck, or if you happen to have a person who just really loves to cook, the group could contribute money toward a dinner fund and let that person loose to serve by cooking!

Over the meal, people can talk with each other about their days/weeks. If there are children present, it would be important to engage them in conversation (to the amount that they are comfortable).

As children are done eating (usually faster than adults!), they are free to be excused from the table and redirected to an open play space, an offered activity, a video, etc.

6:45pm Adults begin more focused time, recognizing that in most instances with kids, the kids will come-and-go and adults will from time-to-time need to get up and help them

Ask and respond to 1 question from Group A and 1 from Group B. You might want to keep the same questions for a couple months at a time and then switch them up.

Group A

- Where have you experienced the most life in the last week?/Where have you experienced a real lack of life in the last week? (the Examen)
- What is God stirring in you through the current Sunday morning message series? How are you (thinking about) responding?
- Choose a portion of scripture for everyone to be reading through the week, and then ask people to come ready to share some 1 thing that struck them/helped them/challenged them in this week's reading.

Group B

- Who in your life are you feeling challenged to love? Where appropriate, the group can brainstorm concrete ways that love might be expressed in that relationship.
- Talk about your recent experience with someone "in your 5," someone you pray for and desire that they see more of Jesus in their life.
- If you share a common place of service and the relationships that are there, you could periodically talk about how that is going and/or do some planning and coordination work that is necessary.

7:45pm

Prayer...as appropriate, kids can be invited back to the circle for a closing time of prayer. **Choose just one** of the following (or your own version) for any one gathering. Again, you may want to stick with one expression of prayer for a couple months and then switch it up.

- A leader could introduce 2-3 sections of prayer, inviting anyone who would like to add to a section. For example, (1) "God, we worship You for who You are and what You're like..." People filling in..."For your kindness...For your mercy..."etc. And, then, (2) "God, hear our prayer for our friends in need today..." People naming names of those they want remembered before God.
- If you feel able musically, you could sing in worship.
- Assuming the presence of kids, when applicable, you could read a children's version of the Bible passage the adults talked about that night and pray out of it together.
- The group could enjoy communion together as part of this time.

8pm

Dessert...should you choose ☺