

HOST

A GUIDE FOR IF:TABLE HOSTS



DEAR HOSTS

Friend,

I love the act of gathering around a table for a deep conversation and a meal. There's something about the table that levels the playing field and allows us to each bring our experience with God, our doubts, and our fears to a safe and welcoming setting.

We all want to build authentic relationships and have real conversations with one another, and our prayer is that IF:Table will help start these conversations and serve women in the church. Our greatest desire is to see women know the God of the Bible and to have deep, honest conversations about faith. And the beautiful thing? That's going to look all kinds of ways. Some of you around a table in a backyard, some in a booth at Panera, others in a meeting room at your church.

No matter how many are at your table or where you meet, thank you for being obedient to the call to make disciples. We hope you have fun with it! Eat, share stories, laugh, cry ... we're sure it will be an incredible experience for you and your friends.

*In faith,
Jennie Allen*



Gather, eat, and have a conversation about God.

OUR BASIC STRUCTURE



While “2 hours, 4 questions, 6 women” is our basic format, we want you to make this your own! Maybe you don’t have 6 women to invite, but you have 4. That’s great. Maybe you can only meet for an hour...sure! The idea is to create a space for hospitality and conversation about God. That can happen anywhere!

“

**They broke
bread in their
homes and ate
together with glad
and sincere hearts.**

ACTS 2:46

IDEAS

Co-workers meeting in a break room over lunch

A small group gathering in a church conference room with snacks

A meet-up at Chick-Fil-A while the kids play

A backyard meal with your neighbors

EXPECTATIONS

PRAY

In preparation for your gathering, spend time in prayer. This is the crux of what we are doing—seeking the Lord. Ask Him who to invite.

LEAN ON GOD

With each IF:Table, the Lord will have a unique agenda. He speaks to individuals differently as you rely on Him. Trust in His strength and direction.

BE TRANSPARENT

You have the opportunity to set the tone for those around you. We encourage you to be honest and transparent, creating an environment for women to open up.

LISTEN AND LEAD

When women are vulnerable, it is a tremendous risk that needs to be honored. Protect them by empathizing. You do not need to speak or pray after each person shares. Point women back to the Truth.

SIMPLE & PURE

We believe that things are done best when they are simple and pure, as opposed to complicated and cluttered. When we put too many unnecessary elements in place, we can often muddle the true intention, which is to experience God.

The questions will open the door for you to have deep, meaningful conversations around the table. As a leader, it is your job to facilitate these discussions and to help break down walls. Don't be afraid to go first. Sharing your heart first will help the women around your table to feel comfortable sharing.

GO FIRST

Keep the relationships the priority, and don't worry about "results." These are people, not projects. Trust that the Lord is in control and that He will work in His own timing.

CARE ABOUT PEOPLE, NOT CONVERTS

Practical Tips

INVITE WOMEN WHERE YOU ARE

Ask the Lord who He wants around your table. Consider inviting a neighbor, co-worker, the mom of your child's friend, or a new friend. These are women you interact with on a daily basis. Trust the Lord to be faithful in your obedience.

SHARE A MEAL

Pick a time to share a meal and go through the four questions once a month.

PREPARING FOR YOUR TABLE

STEP 1

*Setting a
Foundation*

God may be calling you to ask the person you just met at Starbucks. Or maybe He laid on your heart a co-worker who you've shared your life with, but not your faith. Whoever it is that He is calling you to invite, remember that some foundation needs to be laid. Show personal interest in her life. Earn her trust. Know her kids' names, how her week is going, etc. Invest time in getting to know her as a person. A foundation needs to be set before you go a little deeper.

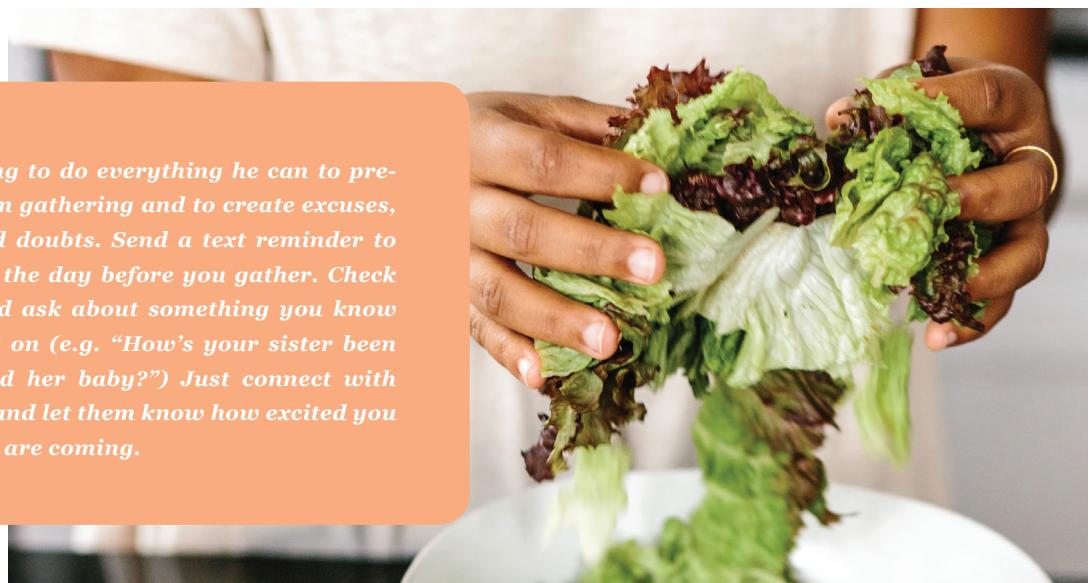
STEP 2

Making the Ask

You can send this out via email, ask face to face, call, etc. Practice having this conversation with trusted friends if that helps you feel comfortable. You could say something along the lines of: "Hey friend, I am organizing a group of women to come over to my home, and I thought of you. We're going to discuss four questions, share a meal, and have conversations about meaning, purpose, and what we believe about Jesus. It will be a group of six women of varied beliefs and faith backgrounds. My hope is that this group can continue to meet for a series of conversations and meals over the coming months. We're all in process and want to get together and talk about it. I want to invite you to come."

REMEMBER

Satan is going to do everything he can to prevent you from gathering and to create excuses, barriers, and doubts. Send a text reminder to your friends the day before you gather. Check in on life and ask about something you know that is going on (e.g. "How's your sister been since she had her baby?") Just connect with your people and let them know how excited you are that they are coming.



CONVERSATION CARDS

Each month there is a recipe and a new set of conversation cards.



This and more can be found at iftable.com



1. Download, print, and lay out the cards on the table with the questions facing up. We have 2 sets of cards available every month from which you can pick. 1) "Getting to Know God" cards are for those who are just learning about God and may not be as comfortable talking about Him. 2) "Growing with God" cards are for those who have a relationship with God and are more comfortable talking about Him.
2. Invite each woman to choose one card.
3. Take turns having each woman ask the question on her card. Allow time for everyone around the table to share or respond to the question.
4. You may not get to all the questions. Answer what you want or feel led by the Holy Spirit to answer.

Where do we go from here?



If you have new believers around your table, consider starting a Bible study with your group using the “I Believe” study available on ifequip.com and in the Shoppe (shoppe.ifgathering.com). If you are gathering with mature believers, there are several other study options available in the Shoppe that you can choose from!

Continue to meet and build community within your IF:Table group each month using the conversation cards posted on the IF:Table blog.

How do we continue to point women to Jesus?



Get a Bible and start reading God’s word (together or individually).



Start attending a local church and get involved in the local church community

I F : T A B L E