

DINNER PARTY DEFINED

By now, you should know what a Dinner Party is, but further defining it never hurts! **Dinner Parties at SoulQuest are an expression of Acts 2:42.**

Dinner Parties are designed to help create three basic things: **Friendships, Spiritual Maturity, and Boldness.**

When your Dinner Party begins to show signs of friendship and spiritual maturity, your group has been successful.

1. **Friends**- Dinner Parties are long term groups. While short term groups have advantages, long term help us foster real friendships. Friendship takes time to develop!
2. **Spiritual Maturity**- Spiritual maturity is just applying what Scripture says to every day life!
3. **Boldness**- When we grow as friends, grow to apply Scripture more, and pray for one another and lost friends, we should be more bold in investing and inviting the people around us.

There are 3 non-negotiables: **Food, Discussion, and Prayer.**

1. **Food**- Everyone loves food. Food is a major part of Parties. It naturally fosters friendship!
2. **Discussion**- Our discussion is based on the sermon from the previous week. This helps to not only learn more, but focus on actually applying what we learn!
3. **Prayer/Outreach**- Each Party will pray specifically for one another and for lost friends. However, not everyone has to pray if they aren't comfortable! Each group will choose an outreach ministry to partner with at least twice per semester!

Each week ask if anyone has a specific lost friend they are praying for. Challenge them to invite them to DP and/or church.

COMMITMENTS

Dinner Parties are a huge ministry of SoulQuest, and with that come some commitments we ask each member to make. These are not burdensome, rather they are for the good of each member!

As the host, you will have the opportunity to monitor and encourage the growth of the commitments in each of the members live's. Each person that joins a Dinner Party will commit to four basic pursuits.

- 1. Family**- Authentic friendships built around food and fun. A family atmosphere that encourages members to open up with one another. When members feel like family, they can care for one another like family.
- 2. Prayer**- Everyone commits to praying for each other and a lost friend daily.
- 3. Consistency**- Everyone commits to attend at least 75% of the possible Dinner Parties. Hosts can help accomplish this through contacting members weekly.
- 4. Welcoming**- Everyone is committed to loving and welcoming everyone that comes to a Dinner Party. This includes the inviting and welcoming of new people. This could be a first touch for many lost friends that are being prayed for.

As a Host, each of the four commitments should be reminded and encouraged often at the Dinner Party!

THE 4Ms

The 4 M's are the four main responsibilities of a Dinner Party Host. While the rest of this guide is important in helping you host your Dinner Party most effectively,

The 4 M's are vital in hosting a Dinner Party.

- 1. Moderate**- Hosts don't teach. Hosts facilitate. Hosts should talk no more than 20% of the time. As a Host, your responsibility is to create an environment of discussion. The more others talk, the better. Some answers may be open ended. Try follow up questions like, "What do you mean by that?" or "Why do you feel that way?" Follow up questions allow people to think through their answers, understand their own answers better, and help others understand too. It is the Hosts responsibility to keep the group **focused** on the discussion and away from rabbit trails.
- 2. Monitor**- This includes contacting members weekly, and planning when and where the Dinner Party will take place if it changes. A big part of monitoring is **care and follow up**. We encourage our Hosts to lead the charge when it comes to hospital visitation and care for the people within your group. When a new member joins your group, you will receive their name and number to contact them with info. It also includes posting group times and reminders to your FB Group.
- 3. Mentor**- After 6-8 weeks, choose someone in your Dinner Party that would make a good Host.
- 4. Mentored**- Once per semester, the DP Coach will attend two consecutive DPs (to NEW DPs only). The first DP, they will simply be a part and observe. The second, they will stay after and encourage/challenge you. This will be a time to express challenges or concerns (solutions welcome), as well as share the good things God is doing! **You will submit your attendance weekly through the Facebook Group.**

GUIDELINES FOR HOSTS

While the 4M's give you an idea of what to do during a Dinner Party, these guidelines will give you some do's and don't's for your DP.

- 1. Cleanliness-** Cleanliness is an unspoken core value at SQ. That carries especially into Dinner Parties. Making sure your home is clean for guests is inviting and says that you were expecting them.
- 2. Breaks-** Many of our groups love their group so much they don't want to take a break during the winter and summer. Take a break anyway! 16 weeks of having people over can be crazy. You need to take at least a few weeks off between semesters!
- 3. Alcohol-** During Dinner Parties, we do not allow alcohol.
- 4. Open the Door-** Some people will stay at your home till work the next morning. When your discussion and prayer is over, and you're ready to call it a night, open the door for people to leave. Don't be afraid to shut it down.
- 5. Stop Asking Questions-** Many of our discussion questions are answered after the first question. If something has been discussed, or you're running low on time, don't be afraid to skip a question or shut down discussion.
- 6. Childcare-** We offer childcare reimbursement for all DPs. If you have children, we will reimburse you \$25 to have a baby sitter come watch all kids during DP. You must fill out our reimbursement form online each week you take advantage of this offer.

HOSTING YOUR FIRST DP

During your first Dinner Party, the goal is to get to know one another and just hang out! Here's how that happens:

1. Conversation Starters

Two truths and a lie - have everyone share three “facts” about themselves. Once someone has shared their “facts”, see if the group can figure out which is a lie.

If I were a... - Go through everyone a few times. Have everyone share their answer to the following... “If I were a... I would be...” And have them answer what they would be.

- Examples:
 - A Cartoon; A Fruit; A Celebrity; etc.

2. How Did You Get Here

Say, “I’m so glad you all made it here! We are going to have an awesome semester. Everyone has a story of how they got here.”

Go around and Ask:

- How did you get to SoulQuest? How long have you been there?
- How did you get to this Dinner Party?

3. What is God Teaching You?

Say, “Everyone has a story of faith. Big or small. To get to know one another a little better we are gonna share ours.”

- What is something God has been teaching you recently?
- What are you hoping to get out of this group this semester?

4. How Can We Pray for you?

Say, “Each week we pray for each other. We pray for requests, praise God for answers, and pray for lost friends.”

- What is something you’re thankful for to praise God for?
- What is something you’re asking God for?
- Who is a lost friend you are praying for? Everyone write down the name of your person — the goal is to get them to church multiple times as you’re praying for them.

5. What is a Dinner Party and what are the Commitments?

At this point remind everyone what a DP is AND the commitments we all make to one another and the DP.

HEALTHY DINNER PARTY

We don't want to have Parties just to have Parties. We want our Parties to be healthy and growing! Health is vital in Parties! So, what is a healthy Party?

- 1. Committed**- The members are following and engaging in the commitments of a Party.
- 2. Growing**- A healthy Party is a growing Party. Three types of growth are important here.
 - **Spiritual Growth**: individuals are growing in their relationship with Jesus. Spiritual growth is seen through our obedience to Jesus' teachings, and our love for others (John 15).
 - **Relational Growth**: individuals are growing in their friendship. This is seen best on days and times other than your Parties. When people begin to hang out at other times, they are truly becoming friends.
 - **Numerical Growth**: growth in the amount of people attending your Party. The goal is to multiply! You can't multiply unless more people come. When someone gives their life to Jesus on a Sunday morning, it is a great chance to invite them to your Party!
- 3. Multiplying**- A healthy Party is a multiplying Party. Each Party should multiply after 6-8 months! That's why it is so important for you to find a new host to mentor after 6-8 weeks.
 - When your Party multiplies, it should be a time for each of the members to celebrate!
 - Be sure to stay on track with what a Party truly is, so that you're multiplying a good Party.

CHOOSING A NEW HOST

Dinner Parties are built on a multiplication model. **One of the most important aspects of Hosting is choosing a new Dinner Party Host to mentor so that multiplication can happen.**

We've broken it down into 4 easy steps!

- 1. Discover**- For the first 6-8 weeks, watch your Party. Look for people in your Party that are servants, love the Parties, and could be a good fit to host discussion.
- 2. Deliver**- Once you've found someone that would make a good Host, deliver your recommendation to the Connections Director. This will give our pastors a chance to pray and approve your recommendation!
- 3. Deliver to Person**- Once you've given the name to the Connections Director, and they've been approved, deliver your thoughts to the person whom you'd like to mentor as a new Host! Present the opportunity and ask them to pray about it. If they decline, just repeat the process!
- 4. Disciple**- To disciple someone is literally to teach them. Once, you've discovered the person and they've gone through the delivery, it's time to teach them the in's and out's of Hosting. The staff will help you in training, but this new person will be your right hand man or woman! Just show them the ropes! When you think they're ready, let them host a Dinner Party, and lead out in discussion.

When your Party outgrows 12-15 people, your disciple can multiply into a new Party!

NEW MEMBERS

Dinner Parties are “Open” groups. This means that anyone at anytime can join a group, as long as the group has room. Here are some guidelines with new members.

1. **Contact** - When someone signs up for a DP, you will be sent their contact info to text or call them as soon as you are able.
2. **Meet** - BEFORE they attend your DP, you should meet them at church. This allows them to have a physical connection with you. That makes it less awkward for them on their first DP.
3. **Recruit** - When new members join your group, remind them they are welcome to bring any friends or family they have — **as long as you have room.**

STARTING NEW GROUPS

We start new groups almost every semester. Most of the time our new groups are multiplied from existing groups! That’s what we want! Here are some tips if you are starting or multiplying a new group.

1. **Others** - New groups must begin with 2-4 OTHER committed people. These people should be from your existing DP, or from the church in general. This helps make sure the group has a critical mass to be successful.
2. **Coach** - New groups will be monitored more closely by a DP Coach. They will attend, and stay in contact with you more than other groups to assure you and encourage you.

F.A.Q.s

Here are some frequently asked questions regarding Dinner Parties. Remember, if you ever have any questions, contact the Connections Director or a Pastor.

- 1. What if I don't know an answer to a question?** We expect you to be growing more every day, but that doesn't mean you will or even should have all answers. If you don't know, reply, "Great question. I'm not sure on the answer, but I will ask one of our pastors and find out!" (Be sure to actually ask and bring the answer back the next week)
- 2. How long should the Dinner Party last?** Dinner Parties should last no less than 1 hour and no more than 2 hours.
- 3. What if I can't find someone from my Party to be a new Host?** It's very important that we work very hard to find an apprentice to be a new Host eventually. If you've tried hard or offered to multiple people, with no one accepting, the Pastors can help you to find someone that may not be in your group currently.
- 4. What if one person is dominating the discussion?** Encourage everyone from the beginning of your Party to stay brief, Biblical, and beneficial. If it continues, try to involve others by asking their opinions on a discussion.
- 5. When and where do we meet?** Totally up to you and your Party! You can meet on any day, and at any place. Try hard to be consistent! As long as there is food, discussion, and prayer, you're good! Just let the Connections Director know when and where, so new people can sign up.
- 6. Should we do discussion during dinner?** Probably not. We encourage discussion and dinner to be separate. We want people to become friends over food, and spiritually mature over discussion. If you are meeting at a restaurant, you may have to have discussion before dinner.

RESOURCES

As a Dinner Party Host, you will be helping others grow in their relationship with Jesus and one another. Here are some resources for you to continue to grow personally, as you and your group grow together.

Online Resources:

[BibleGateway](#)- An online, searchable Bible, great for finding Scriptures relating to specific topics.

[bible.com](#)- An online Bible with reading plans based on topics, books of the Bible, Christian songs, and more.

SoulQuest Media Archive:

[Watch/Read](#)- Where you can find sermons, worship songs, and First Fifteen devotionals from SoulQuest.

Book Suggestions:

[The Circle Maker](#)- By Mark Batterson on prayer.

[Crash the Chatterbox](#)- By Steven Furtick on hearing God's voice above all others.

[The Most Excellent Way to Lead](#)- By Perry Noble on spiritual leadership.

[Ask It](#)- By Andy Stanley on one question to revolutionize your decision making.

[Next Generation Leader](#)- By Andy Stanley on leadership.

[Fifty Shades of They](#)- By Ed Young on choosing the right friendships.

On-The-Go Growth:

[The Bible App](#)- The Bible.com app for reading plans, etc.

[SoulQuest App](#)- Sermons, worship songs, Bible reading plans, DP discussion questions, and more.

[Andy Stanley Leadership Podcast](#)

[Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast](#)