

Four Essentials of a Rock House Church

For a small group of Christians to be considered a legitimate house church, we believe it is essential that four “directions” of God’s love be exchanged as a lifestyle among the members.

- ❖ First, each individual and the group as a whole must be constantly receiving into their hearts and minds by faith, their Father’s mercy, grace, love, glory, truth, power and life through Christ by the Holy Spirit. They must all be in regular communion with Christ who dwells in their hearts as Lord. Obedience to the Lordship of Christ is a supernaturally natural result of their faith and love for Him. The individuals and the group should enjoy the manifest presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Both the Word of God and the Spirit of God are the means by which Father’s life flows into the house church.
- ❖ Second, the members must be constantly reciprocating the love and glory they receive from God back to Him, in the form of praise, worship, and obedience. Bringing glory to God as a lifestyle and expanding His glory in the nations is their top value. The full expressions of praise and worship described in the Bible should be practiced when they gather.
- ❖ Third, the family members must exchange Christ’s love, wisdom, and power between one another through covenantally connected hearts and minds. This includes an ongoing lifestyle of acceptance, encouragement, forgiveness, affection, affirmation, discipleship, correction, accountability, inner healing, personal prayer ministry, communion (Lord’s supper/agape meal), bearing one another’s burdens, helping meet each other’s needs especially during difficult times, and having lots of fun. The point is to help facilitate the formation of Christ within each other’s minds, hearts, and lifestyle. It is to help each member become like Christ.
- ❖ Fourth, a Rock house church is a small spiritual family, but it is also a spiritual army (platoon) which has a kingdom-advancing mission. God’s life and love must be flowing out through the group to those who haven’t experienced Father’s love through Christ. As the Body of Christ, the group needs to be a corporate and tangible expression of Christ to those it is called to serve. Christ is alive in us and wants to do through us today what He did while he was a man 2000 years ago. He wants to bring the kingdom of heaven to earth, seek and save the lost, heal the sick, cast out demons, and bring compassion and practical help to those in need. The house church needs to be the voice and hands of Jesus. This most effectively occurs when each member discovers and selflessly shares their spiritual gifts, talents, time, money, and other resources. In addition, each house church should embrace the exciting opportunity of multiplying into other house churches. Just as the children of a natural family are

expected to mature and start their own families, so the members of the spiritual family should grow to the point they can reach others with Christ and start another house church. Growth and multiplication is the evidence that a house church has Christ as its center and source and is organically connected to the Body of Christ. We believe house church-planting house churches are the best strategy for evangelism, pastoral care, discipleship, and kingdom-advancing missions.

Other Essential Dynamics of Rock House Churches:

- 1) Father's Heart Of Love:** The father heart of God needs to pervade the group's life causing everyone to help each other discover their identities as sons or daughters of God, enabling everyone to experience the affection of Jesus Christ, and facilitating the calling and destiny of each person. In a healthy family, there is no room for control, manipulation, jealousy, envy, bitterness, selfish ambition, undermining, gossip, rejection, insecurity, judgment, competition, co-dependence, or the concealing of sin. Sin blocks the blessings of God, stunts the maturing process, and hinders God's people from fulfilling God's eternal purpose for their lives. The Father and His family (natural and spiritual) is the platform for bringing heaven to earth.
- 2) Expanding Christ in One Another Through Transparency, Accountability And Truth:** The members must practice coming into the light of God's love and truth by living transparently, confessing sin, and revealing their "inner conversation" to selected accountability partners. Especially in matters of marriage, sexual issues, or other intimate content, mutual accountability should be done with those of the same gender. Confidentiality has to be practiced, but house church members and house church leaders must be allowed to disclose complex, weighty, or life-threatening issues "upward" with their house church leaders or elders.
- 3) Submission and Accountability to Christ in One Another, Unity, and the Benefits of Delegated Authority:** House church leaders and members must value and practice a) mutual submission and accountability with each other under Christ, and b) unity and submission with those who are their elders and the overseeing apostolic leadership of the Rock International Tribe. Mutual submission and accountability are God's provision to protect us from lukewarm or imbalanced Christianity, compromise, abuse, incompetence, doctrinal error, or moral misconduct. Also, the Rock house churches need to enjoy the rich benefits of remaining relationally connected and mutually submitted to other Rock house churches regionally, nationally, and even internationally. It is highly recommended that each house church leader be a part of a closed group of other house church leaders, so they can receive personal ministry and equip one another for more effective ministry in their house churches.

Every house church should be connected to a ROCenter or World Outreach Kingdom Community for mutual edification, equipping, and strategic partnership to impact the region for the kingdom.

- 4) **Conflict Resolution God's Way:** Due to our sin, immaturity, personality clashes, disagreements, and Satan's top commitment to divide natural and spiritual families, conflicts will occur between church members. We must all follow the biblical model for conflict resolution described in passages like Matthew 18:15-29 and Galatians 6:1-5. Every member "should make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3)
- 5) **Honoring Delegated Authority, Spiritual Etiquette, and Godly Transition:** It is very important that the way each person comes into the Rock Tribe, joins a house church, leaves a house church, changes house churches, starts another house church, or leaves the Rock Tribe is done righteously before God with proper spiritual etiquette. Applying God's ways in these situations should be a high priority, because it determines whether we receive His blessings or experience judgment.
- 6) **Consistency with Diversity:** Even though each house church will have all four essential elements necessary to be a healthy family and platoon, no two house churches will be the same. God's consistency with diversity is illustrated throughout creation. Every snowflake has the same elements, but each one is different in size and shape. Every house church needs to find its own life and mission together under Christ. Some groups will focus on whole families and include children. Others will be gender-specific and may focus on one particular age group. Some house churches will never even meet in a house. They may target co-workers and meet in the company cafeteria on break or after work. The Holy Spirit will inspire creativity and diversity, yet with the four basic ingredients necessary to receive and give Life.
- 7) **Holy Spirit's Leadership:** We highly encourage each group to be led by the Holy Spirit. We believe God is unleashing a world-wide revival that will result in a massive ingathering of souls into His kingdom. This will be an organic and grassroots move of God that cannot be contained by institutional or corporate programming. Hearing and obeying Jesus in a present and ongoing way is essential for each house church. This will help them avoid becoming co-dependent on one another, exalting a certain leader, or coming under the influence of "religious spirits". We must totally trust and obey Jesus all the time.
- 8) **Developmental Phases Of House Churches:** The times and seasons of each house church must be discerned and accommodated. Even though all four elements of a house church are essential, there may be times

when the Holy Spirit emphasizes a certain focus. For example, birthing a house church will involve lots of intercession and evangelism. At the beginning, the “members” may just be seeking truth and love and have not yet placed their faith in Christ. Another example, at some point in the group’s life, the emphasis may be developing deep and quality relationships with Christ and one another, so that there is a substantial level of unity and maturity to absorb new believers later. Groups also move through developmental stages just like an individuals or a marriage. The two most difficult stages are the conflict stage and the multiplication stage.

9) Rock Training Center: We highly encourage each member and house church to be actively involved in the Rock Training Center, the city-wide or regional celebrations, and the tribal gatherings. Each believer needs the benefits of receiving the leadership, teaching, and other ministries that come from those who have “five-fold” gifts (apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors, evangelists). We have established a weekly setting (and Encounter God Weekends) through the Rock Training Center for each member of the Rock Tribe to be equipped for life and ministry in the kingdom. Celebrations and Tribal Gatherings are larger settings which allow us to bring glory to God, experience His manifest power and presence, and be mobilized for our regional and international mission.

10) Shared Life and Economics for the Purpose of International Missions: Father has called us to be an international apostolic tribe gathered around Christ, His glory and kingdom, common core values, clear vision, some general strategies like house church planting, and the sovereign joining of God to one another. Having a shared life and mission with members of an international family builds a relational bridge of love that can reach to people groups and nations that are without Christ. North Americans and Western Europeans enjoy water, food, shelter, medical benefits, education, and other provisions far beyond the rest of the world. The Rock Tribe wants to help close the gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” who live in urban centers and third-world nations. Therefore, we want to disperse tithes and offerings so that 50% of the giving of each member goes for local missions and the other 50% of the tithe goes for inner city and international missions. We are suggesting that 40% of the tithe be returned to qualified house churches for local outreach and compassion ministry, 10% of the tithe of all the house churches in a city or region goes to the ROCenters to support those in full-time house church planting and to help underwrite local mission projects, and the other 50% to help support trans local ministry, ministry to inner cities, and international house church planting and compassion ministries. The spirit of this is shared life together in order to reach the most people for Christ. Dispersing tithes and offerings locally and internationally should not be perceived as an imposed requirement, membership dues, or

denominational taxation. We are a spiritual family, and have the freedom to process and negotiate each situation. We want all of our members to see themselves as missionaries who are partnering together for the highest level of kingdom impact. Everyone gets to benefit from the eternal rewards that come from our shared sacrifice and unified efforts. All financial expenditures in house churches, ROCenters, and Rock International should be discussed and prayed through by the leaders, utilized with the highest integrity, responsibly accounted for, and reports made available to members.

11)Trans-Local Relationships and Hospitality: We highly encourage each house church to establish supportive relationships with other Rock house churches in North America and around the world. Often, entire house churches will travel to other cities or countries to help love, serve, and support another house church and its mission. This greatly benefits and enriches the lives of each member. We also want to practice hospitality with those who are traveling through our area on vacations or ministry trips. The members of an international spiritual family do not have to be limited in their ability to pray for and love one another because of geographical distance.

12)Warning: The Great Surgeon General would have you realize that house churches may be dangerous to your spiritual, emotional, and relational health if they are NOT based in the love, presence, and power of Christ - helping each member become more like Christ, and committed to advancing Christ's kingdom in every sphere of life. Many people have been seriously wounded in house church settings. Being in a house church does not guarantee a positive, life-giving, Christ-exalting reality. It is the quality and spirit of the house church that facilitates Life. Abusive, dysfunctional, passive, or immature leadership can open the door to many negative and damaging experiences. Disruptive, unhealthy, or inexperienced members who haven't learned to be led by the Holy Spirit and practice healthy family etiquette need to be trained and corrected. While house churches can be very unsafe and even damaging, they have the best chance of revealing what heaven is like. Just as marriage can be the closest thing to hell on earth or the greatest expression of heaven depending on the couple's willingness to deny themselves and come under the centrality and supremacy of Christ's Lordship. In the same way, house churches can be a disaster or they can be one of best most Biblical strategies for bringing the kingdom of God to earth. The Rock International Tribe will never make house churches its focal point or reason for existence. House Churches are a means to the end of expanding God's manifest glory, kingdom, love, presence and power in the nations.