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FOR CHURCHES · ONE

A letter to the pastor

What this is, and what it will cost you. Nothing.

> If you haven't read **Why this exists** yet — the founding document — stop and read it first. It's short, and it's the why underneath everything in this folder. It wasn't written for pastors; it was written for the people who left your building, or never walked in, and still want Jesus. Read it as one of them if any part of you is one of them. Then come back, because this letter answers the one question only you carry: *should my church try this?*

You've been sold things before. Group curriculum with a launch video. A discipleship pathway with a licensing tier. A campaign in a box that promised to change your church's culture in forty days and left you with banners to recycle. You bought some of it because you love your people and you keep hoping the next tool is the one that finally works. We know, because we've been where you're standing — on both sides of the sale.

One more thing you should know about who's writing this. I've been a pastor for nearly forty years and I've served the same congregation for thirty. We started tables there, in our own church, ten years ago — before any of this was written down. So none of what follows is theory I'm asking you to try on your people first. We've been giving it away ever since, and it spreads for the least complicated reason there is: it works.

> *"I left church years ago. I never stopped missing Jesus. I didn't know those were two different things."*

That's from a real table. You already know who in your congregation could have said it.

So let's start with what this is not going to do.

It will not grow your weekend attendance this year. It might eventually — tables have a way of filling rooms — but if that's the goal, this is the wrong tool and we'd rather tell you now. It will not replace your job; tables need shepherds more than programs ever did, not less. It will not run itself, impress your board by Christmas, or fix a budget. And it isn't new. It's very, very old — which is the reason it works.

Here's what it is. This model turns your congregation into a church of small groups instead of a church with small groups. Little churches within your church: six to ten people around a table, weekly, who eat together, share life honestly, wrestle with the stories of Jesus told out loud, and end every gathering by doing something about it. Discipleship happens at the table. Care happens at the table. Service comes from the table. Sunday becomes what it was always meant to be — the celebration of a family that's been living as one all week.

Your doctrine governs it. Your pulpit, your teaching, your convictions are the foundation under every table, and nothing in this kit asks you to soften a word of it. The tables simply keep their welcome wide — anyone can pull up a chair and meet Jesus in his own stories, the same way anyone can walk into your Sunday service. You already live that distinction. This just extends it to living rooms.

And the tables multiply. Each one raises its next leader from inside itself — people learn to lead by doing, not by taking a class — and when a table is full and a new host is ready, it sends. That's your leadership pipeline and your growth strategy in one pattern, growing house by house at the speed of relationship, in rooms you'll never have to build or heat.

Now the two questions you're actually asking.

What does it cost? Nothing. The model, this kit, the Host's Guide, the fifty-story canon, the safeguarding guide — free, to any church, forever. No license, no membership, no tiers, no revenue share. If you ever want a person to walk your launch with you, that exists too. Ask at comehungry.org and say what you need. Some of that help is paid work, and the churches that pay for it fund the same help for churches that can't — no church is ever turned away for money, and nobody is sold anything from inside this project. But hear the main thing: you can take everything in this folder and start Tuesday without ever speaking to anyone.

What does it look like two years in? Nothing you can put in a report. Six tables you didn't start. A woman who hadn't been inside a church in nine years telling a story about Jesus out loud, badly, to five people who love her. Somebody in your congregation who was quietly done, and stayed — not because the preaching improved, but because eight people noticed when she stopped coming. Two people

who found out they could do this, and are now doing it in a town you've never visited. None of that shows up in attendance. All of it is the thing you got into this for.

What's the catch? There isn't one, and we know you won't believe that from a letter, so here's the whole arrangement in two sentences: everything here is free because giving it away is the mission, and the founder pays his bills with his own profession, outside this project, so the project never needs to sell you anything. Donations fund the work — plainly non-tax-deductible, and they buy nothing.

Don't announce a new ministry. Don't print anything. Pick two hosts your people already trust, write your name and number on the front page of their guides — by hand, it matters — and let two tables start quietly. Your congregation will find out the way the early church's neighbors did: they'll catch people talking about it.

Grace and peace to you and your church. You've been carrying a lot. This is lighter than it looks.

— From one pastor to another

If you want to talk it through with a person, ask at **comehungry.org/ask**. There is nothing to buy here and never will be — we ask who you are so we can help, and for no other reason.

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