

Dear Friend,

Thank you for choosing to serve as an Extension Gathering Host. We realize that like us, you are passionate about seeing people come into genuine relationship with Jesus Christ. Not only are you passionate about God, you understand and embrace the vision of the local church.

Celebration Church exists to lead people to experience a God-first life. As your Pastors, we are simply giving permission to those of you who are fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, to take church to your world and to reach out to more people.

We are grateful that you are willing to serve in this capacity. The pastors and staff greatly appreciate your heart and your commitment to Celebration Church. Always remember that we are here to assist you in every way.

*We love being your Pastors,
Stovall and Kerri*

Table of Contents	Page
<i>The Church Extended</i>	1
<i>Extension Gathering Services</i>	2 - 3
Introduction	
Why Extension Gathering Services	
EGS Defined	
Size	
Requirements	
Host	
<i>Service Essentials</i>	3 - 6
Environment	
Values	
Oversight	
Host Essentials - The 4 C's	
The Service	
Format	
<i>Commitment</i>	7 - 8
Stewardship of People, Offerings & Location	
Commitment of Host	
<i>Resources</i>	8
Materials	
Distribution	
<i>Support</i>	9
Questions	
Public Relations	

The Church Extended

We can't attend church... We are the church!

In the Bible, the word 'church' is a translation of the Greek word 'ekklesia' which is about people – the called out ones. God has called us out from living in the 'darkness' of not knowing Him into the 'light' of living in a relationship with Him.

It's through the church that God speaks, acts and brings His presence.

Ephesians 1:23

The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

When we realize it's through the church that God speaks, that God acts and it's through the church the God brings His presence, it puts a whole different light on the way we view the church.

The Bible teaches that you and I are the church. In other words, it's through you and your life that He speaks, through you He acts, and through you He bring His presence. So each and every one of us coming together makes up this incredible thing called 'the church'.

The church is the hope of the world; it is what God is using to bring lost people back into relationship with Him.

Extension Gathering Service – Host Guide

Introduction

This guide will help to prepare you to host an Extension Gathering Service. It is designed for use in conjunction with a sample DVD of a service. Elements of the service will be referenced in this document. If you are using the guide outside of a facilitated training class, please be sure to review the DVD first. For abbreviation purposes, throughout this document we will identify an Extension Gathering Service by its initials, EGS.

Why EGS?

Let's back up a little bit and explain why we believe in Extension Gatherings as a service option. Over the last 30 years the church in America has undergone a series of steps in the decentralization of service structure which have led to explosive growth. We believe the next wave of decentralization in the church in America will be the movement of Multi-Gatherings. An Extension Gathering Service will ignite the biggest, rawest, closest-to-the-book-of-Acts-experience we have seen yet.

Definition

Extension Gatherings are designed to bring the Celebration service experience (worship and message) out into our community. For those people in our world who are not coming to church for whatever reason, we are taking church to them. These gatherings will be ADDED to the current weekend services at Celebration Church – and none of the services already taking place will go away.

These Extension Gatherings are church services that are held anytime and anywhere. They are not small groups or just video messages. They are hosted services where people can participate in worship, receive the same weekend message shared at our campuses, and connect in with the community and life of the local church - just like they do at any of our current venues. We've taken the best of the weekend experience and packaged it in its simplest form, so it can be experienced in many different settings. These gatherings can take place both locally in Jacksonville and globally around the world.

Size

Extension Gatherings will range in size and number of people attending. Locally, EGs include but are not limited to gatherings at nursing homes, jails, rehabilitation centers, at risk youth group homes and workplaces. Outside the local campus area, EGs are also hosted at universities, military bases and other venues in communities across the world.

Requirements

All that is needed to host an Extension Gathering Service is:

- A Host who is hospitable
- An Environment where people naturally gather
- A DVD of the EGS or internet service for download
- A DVD Player & Television, Projector or Computer to display the service, and
- Materials provided by Celebration Church.

Host

Celebration Church exists to lead people to experience a God-first life. We are giving permission to those who are fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, to take church to their world and reach more people. The hosts must:

- Be members of Celebration Church
- Satisfy the requirements to serve as a host (Background check, interview, etc)
- Be hospitable
- Understand the values of EGS and be able to facilitate an EG from a position of strength.

Acts 11:2

The power of the Lord was upon them, and large numbers of people were brought to the Lord.

Environment

Extension Gatherings as previously described can take place in a variety of places. We recommend having an information table that is located somewhere in the room where materials can be neatly displayed and accessible by all. In addition, any signage used should be clear and the environment should represent a quality experience.

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper) and to prayer.

Values

As this is a launch of a new strategy for evangelism, it is important that we provide values that shape its distinctiveness. These values help to ensure that EGS are positioned correctly to those who attend and/or may inquire further.

Guiding values include:

- **Local Church Focused**

EGS are not stepping stones to draw people into an existing facility of Celebration Church. They are an extension of Celebration Church.

- **Church Service**

They are complete church services and not small groups, video messages, or outreach events. However, they may contain elements of them all.

- **Hosted Gathering**

A trained facilitator must host them in order to ensure that real community can flourish at the gatherings.

- **Outward Focused**

These gatherings must always remain open to anyone who wishes to participate just like other Celebration services and inviting others is strongly encouraged.

- **Extension**

They are an extension of Celebration Church and all the other values of the church must be fully represented at these gatherings.

Oversight

Extension Gathering hosts are supported through a network of Leaders and Coordinators assigned by Celebration Church. At the conclusion of your host training, you will be assigned a leader. They are there to provide ongoing assistance, support and care for you and your gathering.

Host Essentials

As a host of a Celebration Church extension service you are accountable to commit to the 4C's of a successful gathering:

CREATE

- Create a welcoming environment where people can connect into the local church and enjoy the community of others.
- Ensure that the needs of the audience that you are reaching are considered in the way you lay out the room, provide needed materials, and close out your meeting time together.

CONNECT

- Connect with the people coming to your gathering. Be sure to thank each person for coming, especially the first time visitor.
- Be sure to follow up on questions and concerns that people express and remember to respond to them.

CARE

- Know that you are the first touch for people who have prayer needs.
- Pray for those attending the group and follow up with the provided tools with those who are making a decision for Jesus Christ that day.

COMMUNICATE

- At the conclusion of the gathering, be sure to call in or email your meeting report through the channels provided. You may:
Call Toll Free: 877-800-2238 and leave a voice message, or
Email: mgatherings@celebration.org
- Stay up-to-date on new information available to hosts via the web site:
http://www.celebration.org/extension_gatherings
- Stay in regular communication with your assigned leadership to ensure you get the right level of support for your group and get immediate assistance with issues as they arise.

The Service

The service will be provided in its entirety via a DVD or online downloadable file. A new service will be available each week from Celebration Church. We ask that you review the DVD before your gathering to be aware of any requirements or specifics pertaining to that particular service event.

Should you wish to offer communion as a part of the service experience, please contact your coordinator for specific instructions and/or training. We would love to assist you in making this a meaningful time for those attending.

Hebrews 10:25

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.

Format

A typical EGS will be captured each week and all elements listed below will be provided (except for the optional service elements):

- Service Open Segment
- Worship Songs (1-3 songs)
 - Please allow people to engage at their own pace.
 - We strongly discourage replacing the worship with your own.
- Time of Prayer/Ministry
- Offering / Announcements
- Message
- Closing Prayer – Pastor may turn service over to local host for prayer.
- Closing Video

The entire service on DVD would be approximately 45 minutes. For those facilities with time constraints, the option to amend service is feasible by reducing worship.

Optional Components

You have the ability to add certain components to the service if it will enhance the experience for the audience. It's important to understand your audience and what will work in each environment.

- Communion
- Small Group Study based on Message
- Pre and post service music that fits the audience.

Stewardship

As a host of a Celebration Church extension service you are accountable before God to be a good steward of this ministry opportunity entrusted to you. We ask that you prayerfully consider the following as it can lead to removal from your service as an EGS host:

PEOPLE

- The people that attend your gathering are not yours – they are God’s. We must gather them to the local Church that Jesus is building, not our own deal. Please understand that this is a sacred trust and we must steward their participation with faithfulness.
- These gatherings are a forum for community and relationships. You are responsible to foster interaction and connection among those attending the service you facilitate.
- Prayer requests and inquiries should be followed up on as soon as possible. If a pastor is needed, please be sure to immediately contact your coordinator.

OFFERINGS

- Offerings that are given must be fully directed to Celebration Church. Primarily, EG attendees are encouraged to utilize an online giving platform or personally mail their offerings in the envelopes provided. Select EG services will involve attendees giving offerings within service. If you are a host approved for this process, you are provided procedures that must be adhered to in order to ensure the highest level of integrity and accountability. We have ensured that the procedures for the handling of money have been designed with your protection in mind. Failure to abide by them will lead to termination of the gathering. Any theft will be prosecuted.
- Celebration Church is an independently audited 501[c][3] organization. Statements/Receipts are provided for offerings received.

LOCATION

- If the gathering is taking place at a facility that is not yours, we ask that you treat it with the utmost respect and abide by all the requirements of the location host.

- It is critical that you maintain a great relationship with the person or institution that is allowing you to meet at their facility. It not only reflects upon you, it also reflects upon the reputation of Celebration Church and its leadership.

Commitment

Each host is asked to sign a letter of commitment. They agree to abide by the guidelines and the spirit of being a host of an extension gathering on behalf of Celebration Church. As a host you understand the responsibility and accountability that comes with the role.

Materials

Hosts will be provided materials needed to facilitate an extension gathering at the initial host training. Additional supplies will be provided as necessary.

Distribution

Materials, which could include each week's DVD, will be distributed upon request. A new service will be available each Wednesday following the Sunday service. Many options are available to facilitate gatherings at the various locations around the world.

[Let your Coordinator know your preference]

- **LOCAL** Gatherings:
Pickup at Midtown location
10302 Deerwood Park Blvd • Jacksonville, FL 32256
Sun • 9:00am - 1:30pm
Weekdays Mon - Thur • 9am - 5pm
- **REGIONAL** Gatherings:
Mailed weekly to designated address
- **INTERNATIONAL** Gatherings:
Periodic Mailings of 12 wks of services
- **WEBSITE DOWNLOADS** (All Gatherings):
A new EG service is available for download from celebration.org by Wednesday of each week.

Support

Pastors, staff and lay leaders are here to assist you as you connect to those attending your extension gathering service. There is a leadership structure in place to help you and answer any questions or concerns you may have. If you have a situation where you are in need of guidance, here are the steps to follow. Please contact your Leader or Coordinator to discuss your needs. The Extension Gathering Coordinator is available to serve you in the following ways:

- Pray for your gathering
- Provide pastoral care
- Provide regular communication (bi-weekly)
- Encourage you as a host
- Visit local/regional gatherings on a quarterly basis

If you have additional questions or concerns that cannot be answered by your leader, you may email:

mgatherings@celebration.org

Public Relations

Regarding inquiries about Extension Services or Celebration Church from media sources, please direct all questions to our church offices in Jacksonville, Florida.

Celebration Church of Jacksonville
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Jacksonville, Florida 32256
(904) 737-1121

