



One-to-One Relational Meetings

The One-to-One relational meeting is an intentional, well-framed conversation between two people. It is the basic building block of all relational (or community) organizing, a potent tool for community formation and movement building. It connects head and heart, motivation (why we act) and strategy (how we act), and requires us to meet The Other with open ears and hearts, sharing and receiving stories of what matters most.

What does a One-to-One Meeting help us to do?

- form relationships
- welcome people from all ends of the spectrum
- discern where the Spirit is moving
- claim our own callings
- identify our own and others' gifts and wisdom
- discover common purpose and build power
- heal brokenness and overcome resistance
- stir up ideas and direction for a new ministry
- get feedback for current or past ministries
- build a culture of relationship and trust

How can we begin?

Host One-to-Ones in a low-pressure environment within your church, using questions from Set 1:

- During a sermon, invite people to talk to a partner around a question related to the topic
- During coffee hour, "Round-Robin" style, in one- or two-minute blocks with a variety of people
- At the start of church meetings, to get grounded and connected
- During Christian Formation Hour, in five-minute blocks, to explore issues and community life
- Be ambitious and organize a 1:1 campaign throughout church

Shift to in-depth meetings, using questions appropriate to the relationship (see Sets 1, 2 and 3):

- After deepening community, set up One-to-Ones with neighbors and (potential) ministry partners.
- Offer an honest invitation that expresses your desire to have a mutually enlightening conversation. For example, you might explain, "Our ministry is doing some listening in our neighborhood (or among our allies or with each other). I'd love to hear your story, passions and questions around [fill in blank] and share my own. Could we meet for about 45 minutes soon?"

Have a mutual and respectful conversation:

- Two people meet for an agreed upon time – anywhere from 2 minutes to an hour.
- This is **not** surface small talk, pastoral conversation or an interview, with one person speaking and the other listening. Rather, both share stories of the convictions and hopes that drive them.
- The sharing is usually guided by a compelling concern and reflection on specific experiences.
- You may have to go first, to model storytelling and hospitality. Paint a picture and recall specifics.
- The host/initiator asks open questions to help the conversation to go deeper ("Why did you think that?" "How did it make you feel?" "Tell me more"). Move from when/who, into how/why.

Close well:

- Be sure to close well and not allow the conversation to drag along.
- Ask for follow-up opportunities: "Is there anyone you think would share this passion or concern?"
- The initiator should also explore next steps: "What could we do together (for God)?"

How can my congregation use One-to-Ones?

1. **Within the church community**, One-to-Ones help you to ...

- discover shared history, concerns, convictions and passion.
- build trust and pathways for working together and trusting each other.
- identify areas for community transformation, and celebrate what each contributes to that change.

Sample questions within the church:

- What brought you to this church? What keeps you here?
- Tell me about a time that you felt God really alive in our church.
- What have you loved in this church and in our traditions?
- Tell me about a time that you shared your gifts (here or elsewhere). What did you do? What made that possible?
- When have you laughed at church? What was happening?
- When have you seen our church successfully and gracefully handle a challenge? What did you learn?
- When have you seen us fail at something together? What did you learn?
- What changes in our church would concern or even disturb you, and why?
- How has our church shared God's love with our neighborhood? What was good about it? What was hard?
- How do you wish we could share God's love with neighbors in the future? What do we need? What do we have?

2. **With neighbors and people who are not in your church**, One-to-Ones help you to ...

- discover how your church has related to and been perceived by its neighborhood.
- listen for what your neighbors and potential partners need in order to trust and partner with you.
- discover others' gifts, offer your own, and together imagine ministries that build on those gifts.

Sample questions with neighbors and others:

- What kind of community do you dream of being part of? Share a story of when you've seen it happen.
- When have you experienced community? What was that like?
- What issue keeps you up at night or grieves you? What do you wish you could do about it? Why do you care?
- What hope makes your heart sing and moves you to act? Share the story of why you act.
- What is your vision for a loving, good world? Who do you see making that happen?
- Tell me about a time that you shared your gifts. What did you do? What made that possible?
- What have your experiences of church been like?
- What have your experiences of God been like?
- What wisdom and practices in your daily life link you to God? How would you want to share them with others?
- What kind of faith community do you dream of being part of? Would you describe it for me?
- Have you ever interacted with our congregation? Share the story of your experience with our church.
- What do you wish a church would do in this community?
- What could we create or share, together, for the wider community (or for God)?

3. **With partner organizations in your area**, One-to-Ones help you to ...

- engage group-to-group, leader-to-leader: local businesses, yoga studios, neighborhood churches, etc.
- link with civic and religious groups representing communities with whom you seek to engage.
- discover ground where you could meet, share commitments and ministry, and build relationship.
- build your capacity to embrace and value the gifts of The Other and grow mutual partnership.

Sample questions with partner organizations (in addition to those in Section 2 above):

- What passions or concerns motivate people in your group? What are you doing about that?
- When have you seen groups coming together to act on shared values in a way that made a difference?
- What do you wish a church would do in this community? When have you seen churches be partners and allies?
- Has your group ever interacted with our church? Share the story of your experience with us.
- What do you long to see happen in our community? What could our groups do together for the wider community (or for God)?