



Generation CHURCH

frequently asked questions

Why meet in homes?

Meeting in homes or small venues is not a new idea. The Church met primarily in homes for the first 250-300 years of its existence. However, shortly after 300 A.D. meeting in homes began to give way to meeting in large buildings constructed specifically as places of worship. This practice of using “church” buildings has continued ever since, except in places around the world where the Gospel is suppressed. In these places, “house churches” are still common.

Today, some are re-thinking the widespread assumption that the church must meet in buildings large enough to seat hundreds or thousands. High cost is one issue. Does the cost of land and buildings absorb dollars that could be used more effectively elsewhere in ministry? Others are concerned about the level of participation in worship. When the church gathers in groups of hundreds or thousands, is it possible for the church to worship in the participatory manner Paul the Apostle teaches in 1 Corinthians 14:26-33?

Generation Church believes that God’s people can meet in a variety of ways and still be effective. Our own decision to establish a network of micro-churches should not be construed as a criticism of churches that choose to meet or function in other ways.

Why a network of Micro-Churches?

Generation Church believes there is a lot to like about a network of micro-churches. Here are some of the most important features:

- **One church/many meeting places.** Generation Church is a church that meets as smaller micro-churches in a variety of places in the community, much as the first and second century Christians did.
- **Less distance to travel.** Micro-churches minimize transportation costs and time on the road for many participants.
- **Less expensive.** Micro-churches are a cost-effective way to meet. We don’t pay facility rental costs except for our once-per-month gatherings.
- **More outreach dollars.** Because micro-church facility costs are minimal, more funds from tithes and offerings can go to outreach ministries in the community.
- **More choices.** Micro-churches allow considerable freedom. For example, each micro-church in the network chooses the day of the week and the time it wants to meet. If a micro-church wishes to do something special on a particular weekend, such as a work or missions project, or even a camping trip, it is free to do so. All micro-churches in the network agree to meet together once each month at a common location, typically Chandler-Gilbert Community College.
- **Less formality.** Micro-church meetings are informal, open and relaxed. Most groups spend a couple of hours together when they meet because they share a meal as well as worship. The environment of the meeting is less structured than in traditional settings. The trained facilitator is present not to

control the meeting, but to guide it under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

•**Good teaching.** Just like any healthy church, micro-churches expect good, sound, Bible teaching. The person who facilitates a micro-church insures that appropriate time is given to instruction from God's word. He may present something God has taught him. He may use an excellent message or study on video. He may ask someone else to share a brief message. Pastor Forrest visits each micro-church in rotation, and he may also have a word from God for the group.

•**Interactive.** Teaching in a micro-church is kept as interactive as possible. Participants are given opportunity to speak or share if God has placed something on their hearts (see 1 Corinthians 14:26-33).

•**Gifts of the Holy Spirit.** Micro-churches welcome all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so long as the teaching of the Scriptures are followed in the use of the gifts (See 1 Corinthians 14).

•**Singing.** Micro-churches include opportunity for singing if the group likes to sing.

•**Questions welcome.** Micro-churches welcome questions. For example, a participant may ask a question about the teaching given, or about a particular issue, or about the way something is done. The one who raises the question is not regarded as weird or out of line or rebellious. If the facilitator or others don't know the answer, they will help the questioner find one.

•**Prayer.** Micro-churches include time for prayer. For example, a person may be struggling with a particular issue and desire prayer. Sometimes the group may pray together; other times it may break into smaller groups for prayer.

•**Practical caring.** Micro-churches seek to lend a helping hand to those who need it. They support local, greater-Phoenix area ministries such as Home of Hope and My Sister's Place. They encourage participants to reach out to poverty-stricken kids through Compassion. They support missionaries who are sharing the gospel with other people-groups. And they remember persecuted believers in various parts of the world.

•**Community.** In short, Generation micro-churches are about encountering God in community. With God's help, we share his love with each other, edify and equip each other, and engage in mission, all the while growing in our relationship with God and each other.

How does Generation Church train micro-church facilitators?

Pastor Forrest, who has been in pastoral ministry for 32 years, has been meeting and working with the current facilitators for several years, training and mentoring them in the art of servant-leadership. Both current and future facilitators meet monthly for on-going training, with special focus on the unique challenges and dynamics related to leading micro-churches.

Is there something that Generation Church is not?

•**Not a copy.** We are not a copy of the house church model, although some features resemble certain features within that movement. We are not trying to follow anyone's model for church, but simply asking, "Lord, in this generation and at this time, what would you have Generation Church to be? How do you want us to function?"

•**Not a criticism.** By choosing to be a network of micro-churches, we are not criticizing those churches that gather or function in other ways.

•**Not a master plan.** What we are doing is not a master plan to be followed exactly but rather an invitation to explore a new way of coming together as the Body of Christ, always with the desire to experience the grace, presence and power of Christ in community.

Why do you gather in a large group once each month?

•**One church.** We think it is important for all the micro-churches in the Generation network to get together in a large group on a regular basis. All of us meeting together reminds us that we are one church and it gives us the opportunity to interact with other micro-church participants.

•**Inviting others.** We also want to make these events the kind of thing we can invite friends and co-workers to, especially those who are not already connected to a church.

•**Outreach.** We seek to share God's message of love to the people around us who do not yet know Christ. We believe one way of doing that is offering events that feature great music and effective presentations of the claims of Christ.

•**Creativity.** We love to be creative! For example, you might find us doing an outdoor concert on campus, perhaps combined with a "college yard sale" that would raise money for a worthy cause in the community. The possibilities are nearly unlimited for creative events that are fun, Christ-honoring, and outreach-oriented!

Where does Generation Church meet for its larger gatherings?

Generation Church meets on the campus of Chandler-Gilbert Community College, 2626 E Pecos Road, Chandler, AZ 85225. The main cross streets are Gilbert Road and Pecos Road. There are several entrances to the campus. The easiest to use is the west entrance at Emmett Drive on Pecos Rd. Follow the signs for Generation Church.

How and when do you start new micro-churches?

We start new micro-churches when existing groups grow too large for their meeting locations or when there are groups of people anywhere in the valley who want to get a micro-church started near where they live.

There are four basic criteria for starting a Generation micro-church:

1. Available host home or meeting place.
2. Trained facilitator available.
3. A group of people (minimum of 6 adults) who want to be a part of the Generation Church network.
4. A willingness to be a part of the monthly gathering of all micro-churches at Chandler-Gilbert Community College.

Is a micro-church for me?

Obviously, only you can answer that question. What we can say is this: the potential power of learning, serving and worshiping in small groups is amazing! After all, when the church was first born 2000 years ago, the followers of Jesus met as small groups in homes. And they did this for the next 250-300 years!

Maybe the early church was on to something really big and didn't even know it! Good things can happen in great crowds, of course; we are not saying followers of Jesus should only meet in small groups. We just know that when it comes to the church, people easily get lost in the crowd.

In small groups people tend to get seriously involved. They begin to experience community. Because they learn to know each other well, they tend to care more for each other. And when small groups meet in worship, they discover the thrill of participating at a level they never imagined possible.

Of course, for some the prospect of being noticed by others in a small group is frightening. But it is also no fun being alone and lonely! Belonging is much better! It is good to be in an environment where someone loves you and cares about you--someplace you fit in. And it is good to be able to give that gift of belonging to others! Some can find that wonderful sense of belonging in a larger church setting. For others it is only found elsewhere.

There is nothing magical about micro-churches. We are all broken people. Whatever size church any of us participate in, we will need God's grace in abundance--grace to trust in Christ, grace to love and forgive each other, and grace to work and serve together in unity.

How do I choose a micro-church?

Check the list of micro-churches on the Connect page of the website. Feel free to connect with any one of these groups. Or call a Generation Church friend and find out what group he or she is a part of. If you have questions or need advice about choosing a micro-church, contact Pastor Forrest at 480-748-0036 or forrest@azgeneration.com.

Criteria for choosing. You may wish to choose a particular micro-church based on one or more of the following criteria:

1. The meeting location is convenient for you.
2. The day or time the micro-church meets works well with your schedule.
3. Someone you know participates in this micro-church.
4. You have established a relationship with the facilitator.
5. A friend or elder has recommended this micro-church.

Contact the facilitator. Although you are not obligated to contact the facilitator of a micro-church before attending, you may wish to do so for directions or to check on the time and location of the meeting for that week.

Get involved! Whatever micro-church you choose, you are encouraged to participate consistently and to faithfully contribute your time, energy, resources and prayers.