

THE PROXIMITY FELLOWSHIP

QUICK STARTER

Everything You Need to Begin

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proximityfellowship.org

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A Word Before You Begin

This Quick Starter is not a law placed over you. It is companion guidance to *The Proximity Fellowship Charter*, written to give you what you actually need to begin a Proximity Fellowship. It explains how to start, what a gathering can look like, and the handful of things worth knowing and honoring from the very first meeting.

You do not need to master the whole Framework before you begin. Read only as much as your situation calls for, then return as questions arise. The Charter governs the Framework and provides the fuller foundation, boundaries, and principles behind what is summarized here.

For now, this is enough to begin. Pray. Open Scripture. Make room for one another. Let the fellowship grow in wisdom, responsibility, and faithfulness as real life gives you reason to learn more.

Part One: Begin

What This Is

Proximity Fellowship is a simple way for Christians to make space to pray, open Scripture, remember Christ, and encourage one another wherever they already are. A gathering may be in a home, a university, a workplace, a neighborhood, a cafe, or a park. It does not ask you to leave a church or Christian tradition you already belong to. It offers a common floor, not a common ceiling. It provides enough shared ground for real fellowship without requiring Christians to agree on everything first.

Foundational Conviction

Proximity Fellowship begins with the conviction that the unity of Christ's people is not something a human Framework can create. It is grounded in Christ Himself and sustained by His Spirit. Christians are therefore called not merely to confess this unity, but to learn how to live more faithfully within it.

Real differences in tradition, interpretation, practice, and Christian experience need not always prevent real fellowship. Where a sufficient common Christian foundation is present, believers may gather without pretending that their differences are unimportant and without requiring one another to become alike where such uniformity is unnecessary.

Gathering faithfully across these differences can itself become a school of Christian maturity and unity. As we receive one another as living members of the Body of Christ, patience, humility, self-control, forgiveness, grace, and love become more than virtues we affirm. They become virtues we are called to practice among actual people. In this way, we learn to depend more deeply upon Christ as our Head and to grow together in Christlikeness. Grace and faith are not merely confessed, but lived.

For this reason, a fellowship need not be institutionally large or elaborate in order to become spiritually meaningful. Christ alone is the ground of our salvation, received through faith in Him, and Scripture remains the authoritative written norm for Christian faith and life. Where believers gather sincerely under the headship of Christ, around Scripture, prayer, love, and mutual care, even a simple and imperfect fellowship may become a meaningful place of grace, formation, and life together in Him.

How to Begin

1. Think of two or three Christians near you. A neighbor, a coworker, an old friend. You don't need to share every conviction.
2. **Invite Someone to Explore It With You.** You might begin with a simple question: "Would you be interested in exploring a Proximity Fellowship together?" There is no need to explain everything at once. You can simply begin by meeting, praying, opening Scripture, and encouraging one another, then see where that shared life may lead.
3. Meet simply. Pray. Read a passage. Give thanks. Encourage one another. That's a complete gathering.
4. Decide together whether to continue. Weekly, monthly, whatever fits. There's no required schedule.
5. Let anything else emerge only if it's needed. Don't build structure ahead of an actual need. If something like coordinating or hosting becomes genuinely necessary, let it grow out of real life, not a plan drawn up in advance.

Not every difficulty requires another rule, and not every helpful response needs to become a permanent practice. Address what is genuinely needed, but resist allowing temporary solutions to accumulate into unnecessary expectations.

You don't need permission, a credential, or anyone's appointment to begin. You do not need to assume a title, office, or position of spiritual authority. You are simply helping to create space in which Christians can gather, share life, and learn to follow Christ together.

This Quick Starter is intended to provide enough to begin, not to anticipate every circumstance that may arise. Some questions can only be answered as Christians learn, discern, and live faithfully together. The Framework can offer common ground and guidance, but it cannot carry the responsibilities of Christian life on behalf of those who use it.

What a Gathering Can Look Like

A gathering may include prayer, reading Scripture together, a hymn or simple thanksgiving, sharing a joy, a burden, or a lesson learned, and encouraging one another. Proximity also receives the Lord's Supper as a practice given by Christ to His disciples and recommends making space for it regularly where circumstances allow. It should be approached with reverence and gratitude, while questions of frequency, form, administration, and theological meaning remain matters of Christian conviction within the Framework.

If you're not sure where to begin, a simple pattern may help. Welcome one another. Pray. Read a passage together. Let anyone share who wishes to. Give thanks. Pray for one another's needs. Stay together afterward for ordinary conversation and care. This is only an example. It is not a liturgy to follow.

No one needs to speak, pray aloud, or display a particular spiritual gift for a gathering to be healthy. Some will speak. Some will simply be present. Love does not require performance.

Part Two: What You Should Know

The sections below draw directly from the Charter and summarize several of the foundational commitments and safeguards every fellowship using the Proximity name is meant to honor. If you reread only one part of this guide, make it this one.

Who We Are in Christ

1. God is one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus Christ is truly God and truly human. He died for our sins, was raised bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, reigns as Lord, and will come again.
3. Salvation is God's gracious work in Christ and is received through faith in Him.
4. Scripture is the authoritative written norm for Christian faith and life, above every human document, including this one.
5. The Church belongs to Christ.

This is a floor for fellowship, not a complete theology. Beyond it, Christians may hold convictions particular to their own tradition without those convictions needing to disappear.

The Framework's Theological Location

Within this common Christian foundation, the Proximity Fellowship Framework is anchored in the historic Protestant Christian tradition. For the purposes of the Framework, the biblical canon is the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament commonly received within historic Protestant Christianity. The books commonly called Deuterocanonical or Apocryphal are not received by the Framework as Scripture for establishing doctrine, Constitutional Requirements, or normative Christian teaching.

This identifies the theological and canonical location of the Framework. It does not require every Participant to become Protestant or to leave another Christian tradition. Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans, and other Christians may participate in good faith where they can affirm the common Christian foundation and respect the constitutional character of the Framework.

Christ Is the Head. We Are Stewards

The Proximity Fellowship Framework may be stewarded by people, but it is not theirs to possess. Christ is the Head of His Church. Those who help a fellowship begin or grow, including Hosts, teachers, stewards, or others who serve, do not thereby become its owners or spiritual superiors. Responsibility may be entrusted. Service may carry influence. Neither creates ownership over the fellowship or the Christians who gather through it.

Hosting Is Service, Not Authority

A Host is a Participant who helps a fellowship gather in an orderly, welcoming, and responsible way. A Host is not a pastor, elder, or spiritual superior by virtue of hosting. A Host should be capable of carrying the responsibilities involved with maturity, humility, sound judgment, and appropriate care. Hosting does not grant ownership of the fellowship, its people, its meeting place, or the Proximity name. A Host may step down, share responsibility, or hand it on without treating the change as a loss of status or possession.

The Protection of Every Participant

Every Participant is owed dignity, freedom from coercion and abuse, and protection from retaliation for raising a good-faith concern. Where children or vulnerable people are present, ordinary safeguarding care is not optional. Supervision, appropriate boundaries, and compliance with applicable law matter more than convenience. If something genuinely threatens someone's safety, silence is not the same as peace. No appeal to harmony should be allowed to quiet a legitimate concern.

Freedom Within a Common Floor

Christians will differ in tradition, conviction, and practice. Not every difference needs resolving before fellowship can begin. Where the Charter leaves a matter open, that freedom is real. Where it establishes a Constitutional Requirement, a fellowship using the Proximity name should honor that boundary. Personal conviction should never be spoken as a command over someone else's conscience. A person may say "I believe" or "I sense," but no one should present a private impression as unquestionable authority over another.

Using the Proximity Name Honestly

If your fellowship publicly identifies itself as a Proximity Fellowship, that carries a limited but real responsibility. Represent the relationship truthfully. Do not use the name in ways that misrepresent what Proximity actually is or imply approval that has not been given. The Proximity name simply indicates that a local gathering has chosen to use this Framework for Christian fellowship. It does not make ProximityFellowship.org the governing authority over that fellowship. Stewardship of the public name concerns only that public relationship. It never reaches into anyone's standing as a Christian or freedom to continue gathering under another name.

Money, Held in the Open

Proximity does not exist to create a financial institution. Fellowship resources are never to be treated as anyone's personal property, and no one should be pressured into giving. Where money is collected for a shared purpose, the people involved should know why it is being collected, who is responsible for it, and how it is used. Where funds become recurring or significant, responsibility should ordinarily be shared and records should be sufficient for reasonable accountability. Small incidental expenses may remain simple. The arrangements should be proportionate to the amount, frequency, and risk involved.

When Something Goes Wrong

Disagreement doesn't mean a fellowship has failed. Listen before judging. Speak honestly. Open Scripture where it is relevant. Seek wise counsel when needed. When a matter involves real harm, coercion, abuse, or serious misconduct, do not let a desire to preserve peace prevent you from addressing it honestly. Seek appropriate outside help or contact the relevant authorities where warranted.

Part Three: As You Continue

Looking Beyond Ourselves

A healthy fellowship should not become concerned only with itself. As we grow together in Christ, we are also called to bear witness to Him through our words, our lives, our love, and our service.

Remain attentive to people around you who may be searching, questioning, or open to hearing the hope of the Gospel. This does not require a program or a particular style of evangelism. Faithful witness may sometimes be deliberate and visible, and at other times quiet and personal. It begins with Christians willing to speak of Christ faithfully, welcome others graciously, and love them well.

If Your Fellowship May Not Stay the Same People

Some fellowships gather in places where people are always moving on, such as a campus, a season abroad, or a posting that will end. If that describes yours, it is worth thinking about continuity sooner rather than later. The companion guide *The Proximity Fellowship Seasons of Transience* offers guidance for shared responsibility, healthy handover, changing seasons, faithful endings, and continuity without unnecessary dependence upon one person.

Questions of Practice

Baptism, the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, elders, and leadership are among matters where Proximity gives guidance while leaving substantial room for Christian conviction, conscience, and local practice. Marriage and marriage blessing are different. The Charter establishes a constitutional boundary for public Framework practice: a Proximity Fellowship receives Christian marriage as the covenantal union of one man and one woman and does not perform, bless, celebrate, or present a union outside that boundary as Christian marriage under the Proximity name. A Participant may hold a differing personal conviction without that difference by itself excluding the person from ordinary fellowship. *The Proximity Fellowship: A Guide to Christian Practices* provides the fuller practical and pastoral treatment of these subjects.

Who Stands Behind This

At present, Proximity Fellowship is stewarded by Michael Lin, its initiator. He is responsible for maintaining ProximityFellowship.org and the public resources of the Framework, together with the practical work required to keep them available. This present arrangement is not intended to become permanent personal control.

As the Framework matures, stewardship is intended to become more shared, transparent, and capable of continuing beyond its original initiator. Over time, others may be invited to share in this work as volunteers, helping to care for the resources and practical responsibilities of the Framework. No human being should become indispensable.

Proximity Fellowship is not presently an insured or incorporated organization. Local fellowships remain responsible for the ordinary care and safety appropriate to their gatherings, including their own arrangements for insurance where relevant.

A Simple Beginning

If you're wondering whether you can start, the answer is simpler than you might think. Ask a few Christians if they'd like to meet. Choose a time. Choose a place. Begin. You can learn the rest as you go.

Begin faithfully. Begin humbly. Begin near.

Christ is the Head.

Scripture is the norm.

No human being is indispensable.

This is v1.0 of *The Proximity Fellowship Quick Starter*, dated August 31, 2026. As companion guidance beneath *The Proximity Fellowship Charter*, this Quick Starter may be refined openly as experience brings greater clarity or wisdom. Such refinements cannot amend the Charter or create new Constitutional Requirements. Where an apparent conflict exists, the Charter governs.

Questions, concerns, or suggestions are always welcome at info@proximityfellowship.org. *The Proximity Fellowship Charter* and the companion guides are available at proximityfellowship.org.

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Digital Resources

Publication links - not part of this publication's text.

Read Online

- [Proximity Fellowship Website](#)
- [The Proximity Fellowship Charter](#)
- [The Proximity Fellowship Quick Starter](#)
- [The Proximity Fellowship: A Guide to Christian Practices](#)
- [The Proximity Fellowship Seasons of Transience](#)

Downloads

1. **The Proximity Fellowship Charter**
[EPUB eBook](#) | [Print-ready PDF](#)
2. **The Proximity Fellowship Quick Starter**
[EPUB eBook](#) | [Print-ready PDF](#)
3. **The Proximity Fellowship: A Guide to Christian Practices**
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Contact: info@proximityfellowship.org