



# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1 WHAT IS THE \$120 TABLE FEE USED FOR?

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“The Open Table experience is a 12-month mission trip teaching members about the transformative power of relationship. As with most mission trips, the congregation and trip members are each responsible for a share of the costs. The congregation may help pay the organizer costs and/or supplies while trip members pay their transportation and incidental costs. Without the congregation and trip members jointly contributing, the trip usually cannot be funded.

Open Table mission trip is funded similarly. The church pays a portion as does each Table member.

Together, this funding helps support Open Table and its mission to increase the impact in your community and beyond.”\*

These payments allow Open Table to provide the model, Launch Handbook and model versions; training and materials for Coordinators and Table Members, background training and support, behavioral health team coordination, the Basecamp project management system and coordination, the Member Portal (tools and resources for congregations) and other project support and coordination.

## 2 WHAT IF I CAN'T BE AT ALL THE MEETINGS?

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Although it would be optimal if all Table members could come to every meeting, the reality is that conflicts do arise in peoples' lives that prevent 100% attendance. The size of the Table makes it possible to carry on the work of the Table even if one or two people need to miss a particular week. While everyone's presence is important, if you have to miss for travel or work, the work of the Table can continue. If you may be frequently absent, now may not be the right time to serve. Ask your Congregation Coordinator if you have questions or concerns.

Table members who miss a meeting should inform the Brother/Sister they are serving as well as fellow Table members. They should make every effort to stay engaged with the group by reading updates on their Table's Basecamp and taking part in finding solutions to issues that come up for the Brother or Sister. That said, attending the meetings and engaging in the life of the Brother or Sister should be a high priority for each Table member.

## 3 WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE ANY SPECIAL EXPERTISE TO CONTRIBUTE?

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Table members don't have to come to the Table with any special skills. We are looking for Generalists to serve on the Table. You don't have to be an expert to serve. Your general life experience will provide valuable insight. What is important is the Table member's willingness to invest time and love to build a relationship with the Brother or Sister and the other Table members. God will use the lessons you've learned on your life journey to bless the Brother or Sister as you engage in relationship with them.

\*Open Table Technical Assistance Manual v4\_6.6.14, pg. 16

## 4 HOW ARE CHAIR ASSIGNMENTS MADE?

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You will have an active role in deciding which Chair (or role) you will have on the Table. Chair descriptions will be discussed at a meeting before the official start of your Table. Each Table member will choose 3 options that interest them and Chairs will be sorted out from there.

Note that while each person will have a specific Chair designation on your Table, there is often overlap between roles. For example, the Finance Chair and the Transportation Chair might spearhead getting car repairs for the Brother or Sister. In addition, another Table member might have a good recommendation for a mechanic. It wouldn't matter whether that Table member's Chair has no direct relationship to money or transportation. The Table functions most often as a group, soliciting feedback from all Table members about a given issue.

## 5 WHERE DO CANDIDATES (BROTHERS AND SISTERS) COME FROM?

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Candidates come from a variety of sources. Many congregations work with private or government agencies, such as homeless shelters or recovery programs, to find their Candidates. Sometimes candidates are referred to Open Table by a personal connection a congregation has. For example, someone in the congregation might know a young woman who is expecting a baby and lacks sufficient resources to support herself and the baby. That person could be referred directly, without the involvement of a third party organization. Whether the candidate is referred through an agency or a personal connection, they must go through an assessment process before being placed on a Table.

## 6 HOW LONG IS THE TABLE COMMITMENT?

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Most Tables meet regularly for a year. For the first six months, there are weekly one hour meetings. After six months, a consensus of Table members and the Brother or Sister can decide whether to meet twice a month rather than once a week for the duration of the year.

## 7 WHEN AND WHERE DOES THE TABLE MEET?

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The members of each Table come together to decide when and where to have their weekly one hour meetings. Most Tables meet at a church, but they are not limited to that structure. The day and time of the weekly meetings is arrived at by the group.

## 8 WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE YEAR IS OVER?

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After the year has ended, each Table is required to develop an After-Plan through which members and Brothers/Sisters determine how to stay in relationship on a less formal basis. The Open Table becomes an Open Table Community at that point.