

RURAL MISSIONS



MISSIONAL COFFEE

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO HELP YOU REACH
PEOPLE MISSIONALLY WITH HOSPITALITY



*HELPING RURAL CHURCHES THINK AND
BE MORE MISSIONAL*

When was the last time you gathered around a table? What was it for and who was it with? Growing up I have realised the importance of gathering and part of it is being around a table.

I have countless stories from my own life of what it looks like to share around a table, from blowing out candles on a birthday cake, gathered with loved ones, to more deep meaningful conversations with mentors from church. I wonder what stories you have around a table?

This guide is to help you think more missionally about what it could look like to gather people with a missional purpose. Over the course of the guide there will be ideas that are suggested to help inspire you and help you think what mission could look like for you and your church around a table.

CONTENTS

1

THEOLOGY

2

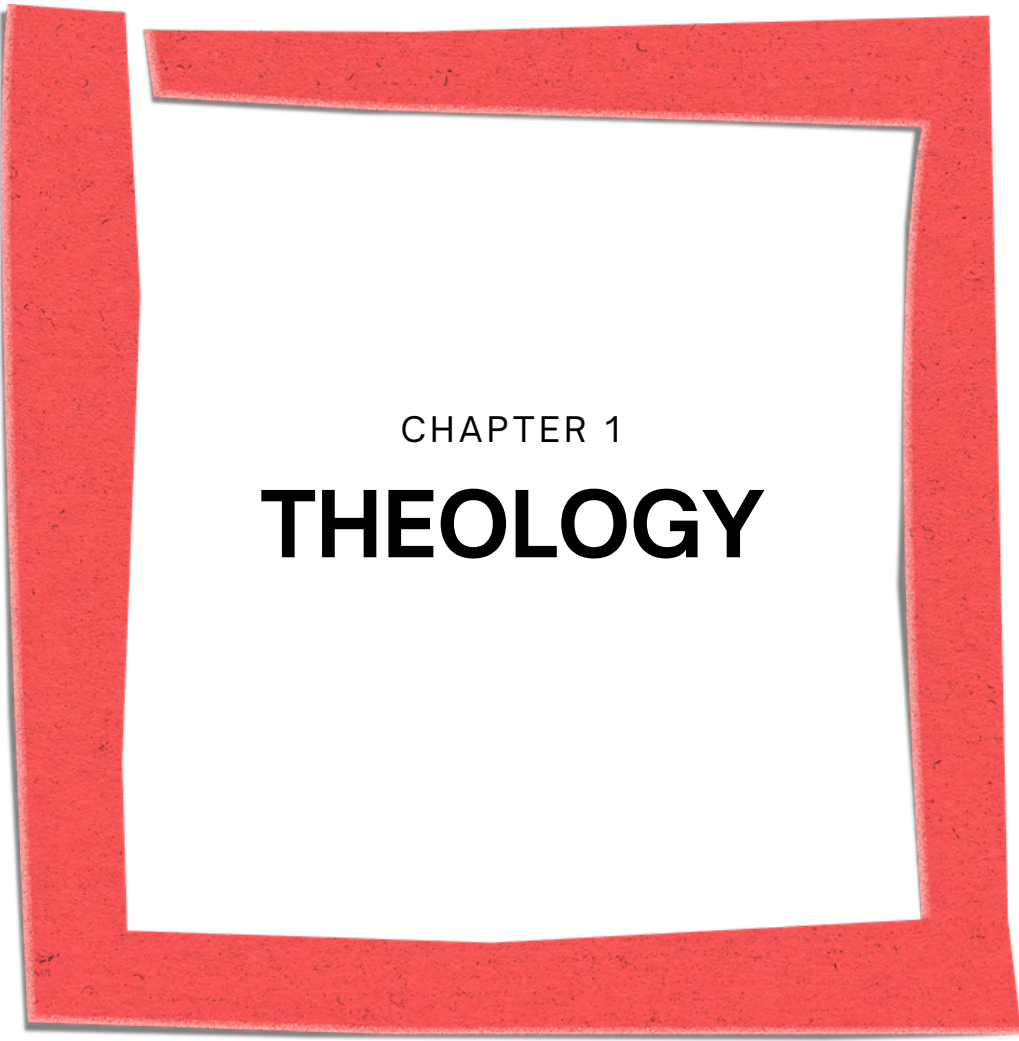
COFFEE

3

GATHERING IN A COFFEE SHOP

4

GATHERING IN CHURCH FOR
COFFEE

A thick, red, textured border, resembling heavy cardstock or paper, frames the central text. The border has a slightly irregular, hand-cut appearance with some fraying at the corners.

CHAPTER 1

THEOLOGY

THROUGHOUT THE SCRIPTURES, WE SEE A VARIETY OF MODELS OF HOSPITALITY EXPRESSED IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS AND CULTURE THAN US TODAY.

In this guide, we will draw on stories from the Bible as our foundation, while also recognising the cultural expectations and settings in which these acts of hospitality took place will differ to us today. Within the historical context of the Bible, people didn't gather around a table like ones we have within our homes and churches. They would gather on the floor to have fellowship together. But the heart and principle remain for us today. Meals were often shared on low tables, mats, or even cloths spread on the ground, with people sitting or reclining close together. What mattered most was not the furniture, but the fellowship and the act of sharing food, stories, and life.

Throughout Scripture, meals are moments of hospitality and encounter with God and others. Whether Abraham welcoming strangers under the oaks of Mamre or Jesus sharing bread with his disciples, the table in whatever form becomes a place of welcome, generosity, and grace for people who go to church and outsiders too.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF GATHERING, FOR YOUR CHURCH AND YOUR COMMUNITY?

There are so many ways you can gather with purpose and within that there will be a deep dive of three missional ideas which could be a framework for your mission or help you think of different ways to serve your local area. What would it look like for you to share hospitality through your church? Could you set aside a time to open your doors for people to come, chat, and gather? Doing so creates a space of welcome and connection, offering your church an opportunity to build relationships within the community.

In this section, we will consider the mission and potential impact of creating a hospitality space for your church community. Our hope and prayer is that this guide will help your church develop real connections, inspire missional initiatives, and become a transformational presence within your local area.

By using this guide, we want to help you explore ways to set up a hospitality space outside of regular worship services, an initiative that can benefit your local community while also serving as a platform to build relationships and share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Firstly, let's look and think about whether this aligns with your mission statement and values as a church.

Take some time to reflect on your church's values and mission:

- What are the core values and mission of your church?
- How could a hospitality space align with and enhance your overall mission?
- In what ways might this space help your church engage more deeply with the community?

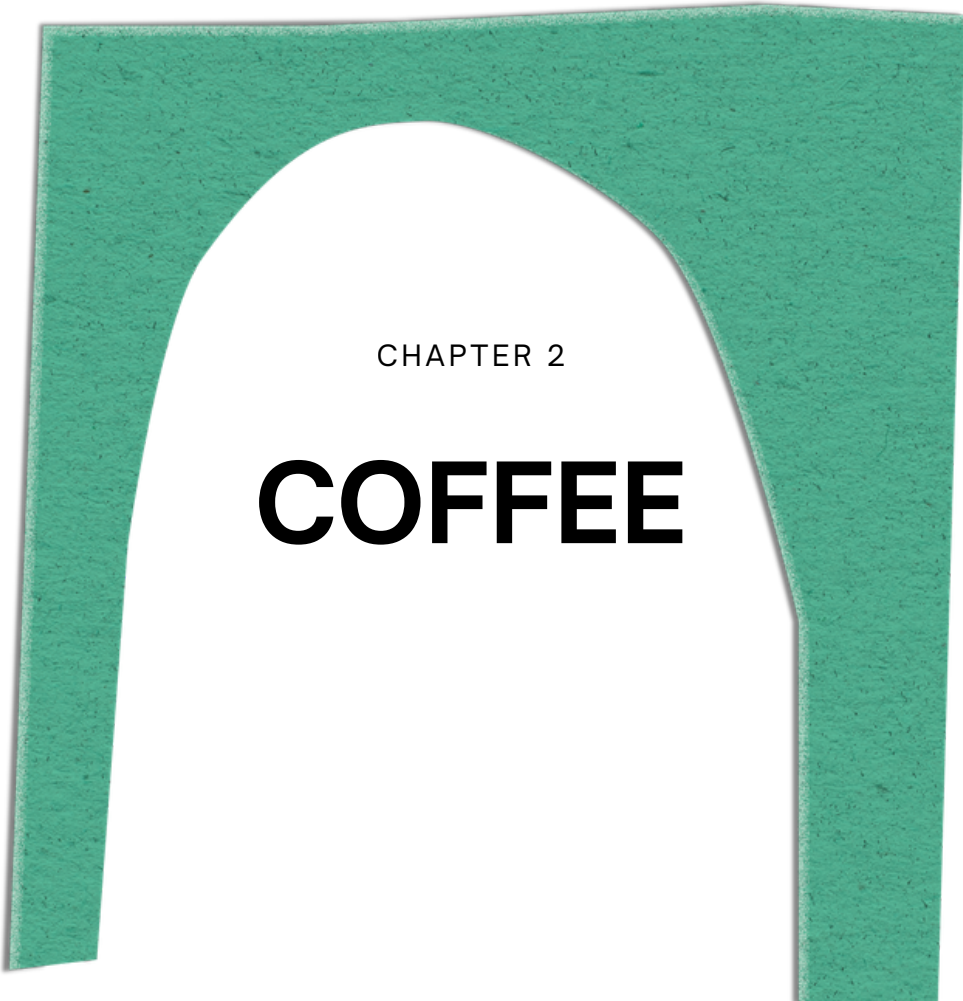
If this aligns with your church's vision and values, take time to pray about it. We encourage you to invite others from your church to join you in prayer and discernment, seeking God's guidance together.

Mission is not meant to rest on one person's shoulders, but to be carried by a community who, together, establish and live out this mission in service and worship of God. Once you have gathered those who have been commissioned in prayer, set aside a time to come together and share what you sense the Lord is saying. Write them down and keep looking back at them.

As you begin to lay the foundations for gathering, consider starting with a mission statement rooted in your church's vision and shaped through prayerful discernment. This does not need to be long or complicated. It could simply be a sentence or a short paragraph, perhaps woven together with a verse of Scripture that captures the heart of what you hope the gathering will be. This sets the foundation, and it begins to form the roots of this new initiative.

Our Missional Toolkit is a free resource created and developed by Rural Missions.





CHAPTER 2

COFFEE

MISSION DOESN'T NEED TO BE COMPLICATED

At Rural Missions we've created simple tools to help you share faith in everyday life. Here is our first idea for gathering around a table. What would missional coffee look like to you? Disclaimer - it doesn't have to be coffee, any drink will do. Throughout the Bible, people are drawn together through food and drink, and even today it is still one of the simplest ways to connect and build relationships.

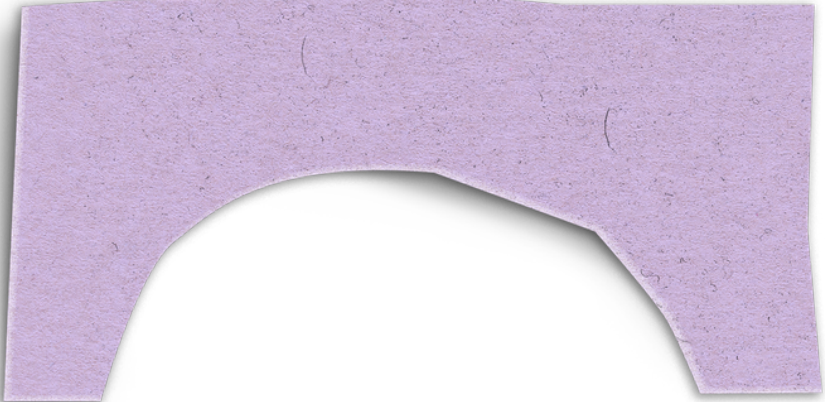


MEETING
PEOPLE OVER A
DRINK CREATES
SPACE FOR
CONNECTION
AND OPENNESS

It's a simple way to catch up, share life, and build relationships, while being ready to share your faith naturally with people. Whether it's someone you're meeting for the first or hundredth time, gathering and sharing is a key element of doing mission in everyday life.

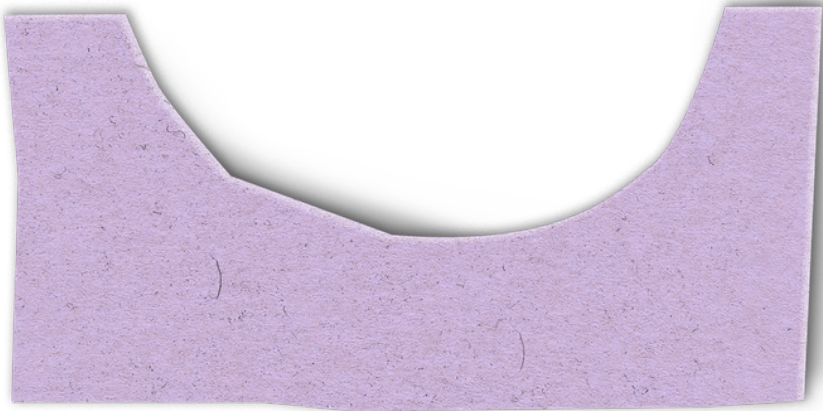
I WONDER
WHAT THIS
COULD LOOK
LIKE FOR YOU
AND YOUR
CHURCH?

The flexibility of the gathering could be as simple as going and meeting with people intentionally at a local coffee shop or creating something more formalised within your church buildings. Below are some practical ideas for both.



CHAPTER 3

GATHERING IN A COFFEE SHOP



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED SIMPLY GOING FOR COFFEE WITH SOMEONE AS A MISSIONAL IDEA?

This is an informal missional idea which can help you get to know people whilst also sharing the love of God to people you know.

**COFFEE SHOPS, CAFÉS,
TEAROOMS, OR COMMUNITY
HUBS CAN BE WONDERFUL
SPACES FOR MISSION**



They are relaxed, neutral environments where people often feel comfortable opening up and having meaningful conversations. Gathering there allows relationships to deepen naturally while also being part of the life of the local community.

If you are meeting someone new, or someone you do not know very well, it is wise to let a friend or family know where you are meeting, what time, and roughly how long you will be there. If anything feels uncertain or uncomfortable, it is absolutely fine to rearrange, or take someone with you, or cancel altogether. Keeping yourself safe is always the top priority.

Mission starts with relationship, and gathering together embodies that principle. The Gospels are full of Jesus meeting people around food and drink in ordinary settings that became powerful moments of encounter. Sitting down for coffee or tea gives space for listening, sharing, and showing genuine care.

ACTIONS...

- Think of one person you could invite for a drink this week, perhaps a friend you have not seen for a while, or someone you often meet briefly but rarely get the chance to talk to properly.
- Use the opportunity to ask open, curious questions and really listen.
- Do not feel pressure to make it about faith. Authentic friendship and interest in someone's life are missional in themselves. God is already at work in both of you.



Gathering over coffee may seem small, but these small moments can be seeds of transformation, spaces where God's love is shared through listening ears, kind words, and simple presence.

When you meet, examine your heart and mind. Don't make an agenda because it isn't a formalised meeting and be intentional. Perhaps you want to pray beforehand and if appropriate ask them if they would like prayer for anything in your goodbyes. In the simple phrase, it is showing you care and more importantly that God also cares about them as an individual.

The joy of this missional initiative is that it comes with great flexibility, and it is adaptable to whatever life throws your way. So, what could this look like for you, gathering in a coffee shop as part of your everyday mission?

It might become a weekly rhythm, meeting different people and building new connections across your community. Or it might be something you do monthly with the same person, creating space for a friendship to deepen and faith to grow naturally over time.

Four vertical, slightly textured yellow paper strips are positioned behind the text, creating a layered effect. They are of varying heights and are slightly offset from each other.

CHAPTER 4

GATHERING IN CHURCH FOR COFFEE AS A MISSIONAL IDEA

DO YOU HAVE A NATURAL GATHERING POINT WITHIN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY?

In many rural areas, there are few social spaces where people can simply meet and connect. Your church could help fill that gap.

Consider opening your doors once a week or once a month for a regular coffee time. A space of welcome, belonging, and conversation for everyone in your community.

It's important to have a clear mission and vision for this gathering. A defined purpose shapes the culture, guides your direction, and helps the ministry grow. With strong roots and firm foundations, your coffee gathering can become a place where relationships deepen, community life flourishes, and the love of God is shared in natural and meaningful ways.

Our aim in this next section is to help you create those roots and foundations. To help shape your ministry so it reflects the kingdom of God right where you are.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS?

What do you imagine your coffee time could become? A place of welcome for newcomers? A space for friendship and laughter? A point of connection for those who are isolated? Take some time to dream and pray about what God might want to grow through this simple act of hospitality.

What is the demographic of your area?

Knowing who lives around you helps you serve them best. Ask:

- What are the rhythms of the community? When are people free to gather?
- Is your church located near a school, could you welcome parents and carers after drop-off or before pick-up?
- Are there young families locally who might value a play space alongside coffee and conversation?
- Does your community include older residents who might be lonely and in need of companionship?

By paying attention to your local rhythms and needs, you can create a space that truly belongs to your community one that reflects God's heart of welcome, connection, and love.

A coffee morning might seem simple, but when it's grounded in prayer, purpose, and people, it becomes something much deeper: a ministry of presence that reflects the hospitality of Jesus. These steps will help you establish strong roots and a firm foundation for your coffee gathering, and for it to be purposefully for the community that you serve.

LOOK AT YOUR SPACE

A warm, welcoming space is at the heart of a coffee gathering. Take a careful look at the area you are using and ask:

- Is it inclusive? Does it serve the people you are inviting?
- Families with young children: Is there space for pushchairs? Are there facilities for changing nappies? Could you provide a small play area or toys?
- Accessibility: Is there a disabled toilet or ramp for wheelchair users? Are entrances and seating areas easy to navigate for everyone?
- Comfort and atmosphere: Are tables and chairs arranged to encourage conversation? Is there natural light, warmth, and a sense of welcome?

Thinking about the details shows that your church values every person who walks through the door. It's not just about practical needs it's also sending a clear message for individuals saying: You belong here and we care about you.

CREATING A SPACE OF WELCOME

Welcome is an important part of how we invite people into both relationships and buildings. A warm and comfortable environment helps ease a new person into the space. When we create a space of welcome, the way it looks and feels is so important; it often speaks louder than our words.

Think about how your space makes people feel as they walk in. Is it bright, warm, and inviting? Are there places where people can sit comfortably and chat over coffee? Simple touches like dressing a table with a cloth, adding a vase of flowers, or displaying local photos can make a big difference. Warm lighting, clear signage, and friendly faces at the door all help people to relax and feel that they belong.

Creating a space of welcome isn't just about décor. It's about showing love in practical ways. Every small detail tells people, "You are noticed. You are valued. You are welcome here."

Maybe you have an existing ministry that you use. Within that space, is there something you could add, swap or remove to something which makes it look more comfortable for visitors?

ACTIVITIES

Sometimes when meeting with new people it may be difficult to start up conversations, so it may be useful to have some key activities to have on some tables (or its own designated table) for people to craft, create or play when they come and gather! What are some things you can have available?

- Easy to understand games, like a deck of cards, dominos, boggle etc.
- Easy Crafts like card making, bookmarks or seasonal to the time of the year. (Make sure you cater for all ages to ensure everyone can get involved)
- Puzzles like crosswords, wordsearches, sudoku's may be good to help engage people who can come and just be.

PRAYER SPACE

As Christians and as a church, we can offer something even deeper than what secular coffee shops provide, a space where people can encounter the hope and love of God. Have you considered creating a dedicated area for prayer?

This could be a simple prayer table or station where visitors can pause, reflect, or leave a prayer request. You might also have someone available at certain times to offer prayer for anyone who would like it.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this guide, we have explored how something as ordinary as gathering around a table can become an extraordinary expression of God's mission. Whether sharing coffee, a meal, a game, or simply time together, hospitality creates opportunities for relationships to flourish and for the love of Christ to be experienced in tangible ways.

Mission is rarely about creating impressive events or complicated programmes. More often, it begins with simple acts of welcome, generosity, listening, and presence. As we gather around tables, we follow the example of Jesus, who continually met people in ordinary places, shared meals, listened to stories, and invited people into the Kingdom of God.

Every church is different. Every community has its own needs, rhythms, and opportunities. Rather than copying someone else's model, we encourage you to prayerfully discern what gathering around the table could look like in your context. Start small if needed. Be faithful with what God has entrusted to you. Celebrate the relationships that form, the conversations that grow, and the ways God is already at work in your community.

May your tables become places of welcome, your conversations become opportunities for grace, and your church become known as a community where all people are invited to belong before they believe. Remember, the table has never simply been about food. It has always been about people.

FINAL REFLECTION

Take some time, either on your own or with your church leadership team, to prayerfully reflect on these questions.

- What has stood out to you most throughout this guide?
- Where have you already seen God at work through hospitality within your church?
- What gifts, people, or resources has God already placed in your community?
- Who is God inviting your church to welcome?
- What barriers might prevent people from gathering, and how could you remove them?
- Which of the ideas in this guide feels most achievable as a first step?
- What would success look like, not in numbers, but in faithfulness?

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend time asking God to give your church wisdom, courage, and compassion as you seek to serve your community.

Pray for those who may one day gather around your tables. Pray that they would experience friendship, belonging, hope, and ultimately the love of Jesus Christ

