

## Raw Church Gatherings FAQs

### What are Raw Church Gatherings?

Raw Church Gatherings are our main way of gathering on Sunday mornings throughout June and early July. It's simple - you gather with others to be together, grow together and eat together.

- Be together - gathering two households or six people in a home
- Grow together - interact with our simplified, stripped back online content together
- Eat together - no pressure, but why not share some simple food together?

### Erm, why?

We can't wait for everyone to be able to gather all together on Sunday mornings, yet right now, our venue options and the current restrictions mean we just can't do that. Sad face!

But small gatherings in homes \*are\* allowed, and so, inspired by the early church in Acts 2 and Christians all around the world, we want to embrace the chance given to us to embrace a different way of gathering. Sure, there won't be a band or many frills, but where two or three gather, God is there, and that's what matters. This enables every single one of us (who wants to) to gather with brothers and sisters from church, to encourage, to catch up, to pray together and to reflect on God's word together. It's stripped back church. It's simple church. It's Raw Church!

### Okay - I'm convinced! How do I organise who to gather with?

Great question! To help make this actually happen and for it to work well for as many as possible, your Community Group leaders will take a lead on this, and do everything possible to make sure there's a gathering for you and everyone in your group! They'll communicate the plan with you.

### What if I want to gather with people outside my Community Group?

Oooh, I'm not sure, you rebels! JOKE! This is fine! Gathering is the goal! Freedom reigns! If you want to just crack on and sort a group or a gathering yourself, of course that's fully great!

### What if I'm new or I'm not in a Community Group?

We know not everyone is linked to a Community Group yet. Or perhaps you are, but you've not been able to connect for a long time. If that's the case, you are not left out! We can connect you in with a group - even if it's only short term for this Raw Church season - who will then gladly get you involved with a Raw Church Gathering that's going on. And if you've not connected for a while, this fresh moment is either a perfect chance to

reconnect, or a chance to reach out and get connected in another way that works better for you. Just get in touch at [hello@churchcentral.org.uk](mailto:hello@churchcentral.org.uk).

### **What do we do?**

As well as simply being the church to one another and catching up, aim to be gathered around a device by 10.30am when the Raw Church content which will be streamed on YouTube, Facebook and the website (in place of our previous Online Service). The video host will explain everything really clearly, and whoever you are and whoever you're gathered with, you'll be led through a meaningful time of interacting with God and others. It's as simple as gather and hit play at 10.30am. The rest is up to you! We highly recommend cuppas galore!

### **Do we have to prepare a vast banquet of instagram-level beauty?**

NO. Church is family! Just stick the kettle on and be yourselves! Yes, we'd love you to eat together, like the early church, but it's not a rule! And if you do, why not just keep it simple and enjoy some tea and toast? If you want to stretch it to bacon sarnies or even stay on for lunch, great, make of it what you want to. Be creative. But the goal is to gather as family, not stress anyone out! Keep it simple!

### **Do we have to sing together when there's just a few of us?!**

Your call!!!!!! There will be a song or two of worship in the content and singing together in the home is permitted, so by all means go for it! But if you happen to think that's a stretch for your particular gathering, don't worry at all. Just listen, enjoy the words, and dive in speaking out your worship after. Don't let this be a stumbling block!

### **What if I don't want to gather in-person yet?**

That's okay! We know that we all have different paces. We WOULD really urge you to work towards coming to in-person gatherings as soon as you're able, because there's really no substitute for being together. And so we DO want to really encourage you to take this step! And to reach out and chat if you have concerns, so we can work with you. But, ultimately, if you're not there yet, no judgment at all! There could be any number of valid reasons. For you, our Raw Church content will be streaming online, at 10.30am on YouTube, Facebook and the website. You'll quickly notice that it's designed to work best for people gathering in a room together, but there'll still be a news, time to pray, sung worship and a talk, so you'll be able to be part of things from home.

### **What do children do during these gatherings?**

It's up to you parents to do what works for you and your household. Liaise with your Community Group leaders around what's going to work best for you and other parents in your group. The online content will be pitched at a similar level to the online service we've

been using, so kids are certainly welcome, but it may not work for everyone. Some creative options to consider:

- Gather two households / six people in one house, but one or two adults take the kids to another room to be together (no small thing after a pandemic!), or engage with a story or age-specific content
- Agree with the other parents in your groups for one or two adults to take kids to a park / garden, enabling remaining adults / older kids to gather meaningfully. Why not then meet up outside all together after?
- The Central House service that's happening each week for two community groups, WILL be having kids work. If there's space, and if coming to Kids Work is going to serve you best, then parents & kids from other groups are invited to fill up the spare spaces. If numbers become too big, priority will be given to the members of that week's Community Groups. **In this instance, you'd need to book in online for Central House - with bookings opening Tuesday and closing Friday lunchtime - each week the link will be at [churchcentral.org.uk/south](https://churchcentral.org.uk/south)**

### **I have a different question...**

Ask your Community Group leader or get in touch with [hello@churchcentral.org.uk](mailto:hello@churchcentral.org.uk) or anyone from the leadership team, and we'll do everything we can.