

Our House Church in Tracy

By Edwin Bochenski

The Tracy house church started out of a desire to have a local community church. Kathy and I desired for several years to have a local service, but felt God was telling us that the time wasn't right and we should wait patiently and continue to serve in San Leandro. When the Hinemans moved to Tracy and decided to find a local church we felt this was a door opening for us. The Hinemans were as excited about the idea as we were, so we decided to move forward. How to incorporate the house church into the WCG structure took some time to work out. Tracy is actually in Steve Smith's area as he is the pastor of the Modesto church. However, since we had all come from the San Leandro church, we felt more comfortable with continuing to have JR as our pastor. Also, we had to give careful consideration to who we would invite to be a part of the church. We all agreed that we didn't want to pull members from other congregations. We decided that while we would welcome visitors from other congregations we would only pursue new members from the unchurched. Thus the Tracy house church was born.

Our format is the same as that in San Leandro with one exception. Instead of a sermon, we have a facilitated discussion. The facilitator prepares a message/lesson and leads the group in a discussion. I facilitate most of the time but everyone facilitates at least once every two months. This format encour-

ages growth by allowing everyone to contribute as God makes us able. There is a great deal we can learn from each other by sharing what He has taught us. Also, JR visits once a month and will give a sermon or participate in the discussion, whichever we request. Services open with singing. Then we have an opening prayer and anyone can contribute to it. We then share prayer request and updates followed by intercessory prayer. Next is the discussion. Then we close with singing and a final prayer.

We have been meeting for a couple months now and find we really look forward to our Saturday evening service. The services are always enjoyable and uplifting. Afterwards we have food and fellowship around the table. We find however that this type of meeting is more demanding than a traditional service. For example, you can't slip in at the last minute and slip back out as soon as services are over and avoid talking to anyone. When there are only five people, everyone is an important part of the service. Also, preparing messages on a regular basis is more work than it might seem. Not only do you need an idea but you also need to look up scriptures and prepare questions. This means that budgeting your time becomes important and maybe you have to skip some of the things you had wanted to do.

Over the next year we hope to identify how God would have us serve in our commu-

nities. Jesus ministered to great numbers of people wherever He went and we hope to become involved in His ministry in this area. We feel that ministry should come before evangelizing so that if God blesses us with new members they also can become involved in His ministry.

We think often of our friends who are the other two congregations in our church circuit. May God bless us all as we give our lives to Him.

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Editor's Note:

It is wonderful to see our new congregation springing up in Tracy! We pray for your success and growth. The Tracy Home Church welcomes visitors. The congregation meets each Saturday at 6:00 PM, at the Hinemans' house. Skip, Goldie and Lacey live at 1861 Mello Court.

Directions:

Take I-580 East toward the Central Valley.

Take I-280 East toward Tracy and Stockton.

Exit the freeway at the Grant Line Road exit.

Turn right on Grant Line Road.

Turn right on Corral Hollow Road.

Turn left on Alegre Drive.

Turn right on Duncan Drive.

Turn left on Mello Court.

