



Frequently Asked Questions

1 WHO IS OPEN TABLE?

The Open Table is a non-profit organization that trains faith communities, community organizations business, government agencies and other sectors to implement the Open Table Model. This Model outlines a way through personal relationships, for these sectors to work together to transform the intellectual and social capital and personal networks of their members and employees into tools individuals and families experiencing economic/relational poverty can use to develop and implement plans to have better lives. Through Open Table, communities move from transactional responses to poverty to transformational solutions.

2 WHAT IS THE \$120 TABLE FEE USED FOR?

The Open Table experience is a 12-month journey teaching members about the transformative power of relationship. Due to the significant time commitment being asked of Table members asking them to have some “skin in the game” helps to ensure that potential Table members are making an informed choice to serve. Each Table member contributes \$120. These Table member payments go directly to funding the Open Table organization to provide the Model Handbook, training and materials for Mission Leaders and Table Members, the Open Table University (member portal with tools and resources) and other model supports and coordination.

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

Although it would be optimal for all Table members to attend 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 weekly meeting. While everyone's presence is important, if you have to miss for travel or work, the work of the Table can continue. If your schedule suggests that you may miss multiple meetings, now may not be the right time for you to serve. Ask your Open Table contact/Mission Leader if you have questions or concerns. Table members who find that they will miss a meeting should personally inform their Brother or Sister that they are not able to be at the meeting as well as fellow Table members. Table members should make every effort to stay in touch with the Brother or Sister and engaged with the group by reading meeting updates 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.

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

Table members don't have to come to the Table with any special skills. We are looking for willing, committed people to serve on the Table. You don't have to be an expert to serve. Your general life experiences will provide valuable insight (we refer to this as being a generalist). 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. You will use the lessons you've learned from your own life journey to help the Brother or Sister as you engage in relationship with them.

5 HOW ARE CHAIR ASSIGNMENTS MADE?

Each Table member will have an active role in deciding which Chair (or role) they will occupy at the Table. Chair descriptions will be discussed at a meeting before the official start of your Table. Each Table member will choose three 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, all Table members work together on the issue at hand (as determined by the Brother or Sister). There may be an overlap between roles. For example, the Finance Chair and the Transportation Chair might spearhead resourcing 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 is not responsible for meeting all of the needs of a Brother or Sister so keep in mind that your key role is to be a safe connection for them. Don't forget that there is a vast community of resources to mine.

6 WHERE DO CANDIDATES (BROTHERS AND SISTERS) COME FROM?

Candidates come from a variety of sources. Many licensees work with private, not for profit or government agencies, such as homeless shelters or recovery programs, to find their candidates. Sometimes candidates are referred by a personal connection to the licensee. For example, someone in a faith community/organization might know of an individual or family who are really struggling to meet daily needs. This individual or family can be referred directly. However, finding out if the potential candidate is connected with a community organization and contacting them to determine their appropriateness will be most helpful for the Table. Whether the candidate is referred through an agency or a personal connection, they must complete a readiness survey before being placed on a Table.

7 HOW LONG IS THE TABLE COMMITMENT?

The commitment to serve on a Table is to meet for 12 months from the first official meeting (weekly for one hour). However, during the courses of the Table, the Brother or Sister may become so busy that weekly meetings become difficult. After meeting weekly for six months, at the request of the Brother or Sister, all can decide to meet twice a month rather than once a week for the duration of the year. Note this discussion should always be instigated by the Brother or Sister not a Table member.

8 WHEN AND WHERE DOES THE TABLE MEET?

The members of each Table (including the Brother or Sister) discuss when and where to hold their weekly one-hour meetings. The location for the meetings should be in a place that allows for privacy and is convenient for the Brother or Sister. Meeting locations can include a Table members house, at a room in the local library, an office building, in a local faith community, etc. The day and time of the weekly meeting is determined first by the availability of the Brother or Sister to attend and then by the availability of Table members.

9 WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE YEAR IS OVER?

As the year-long journey nears an end, the Model requires each Table to develop an After Plan for how the Table will continue to stay connected. The After Plan development is done together with Table members and their Brother or Sister. Once the formal meetings of the Table end, they become a natural community. Note that some Table members may wish to serve on another Table and so may choose to stay in less contact with a Brother or Sister than other Table members. Open Table has several Tables that have continued to stay in contact with their Brother or Sister for more than seven years.