



Housing

Living In Community And Doing Life Together

Are you trying to decide where to live next year? What if instead of assuming you'll stay in your current place or living with random people and hoping for the best, you strategically lived somewhere to help you build community, reach out to those around you, and do life together? Here are some tips for finding roommates, deciding where to live, and having important conversations before moving in together.

"How inexhaustible are the riches that open up for those who by God's will are privileged to live in the daily fellowship of life with other Christians!" Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together

Finding a Group

Start with your Life Group! If you're a freshman, there's a good chance that most of your Life Group is also looking for a place to live next year. Your time spent with them each week should give you a great idea as to your personalities, and by the time you move in together, you'll already have a year of life together under your belts. Christian community is a beautiful thing, and "doing life together" can be one of the most rewarding and fun parts of your years as a student!

It helps to share a common vision, purpose, and set of goals for your house. You will already have many of these things in common if you decide to live with people who are also pursuing the Lord through Chi Alpha. Business person and motivational speaker Jim Rohn once observed that people begin to look very much like the average of the 5 people they spend the most time with. This means that when considering future housing, we need to ask: "Who do I want my faith, my habits, and my desires to resemble?"

Finding Housing at CSU

Gather your group in during fall semester, consider your location, and begin to think through plans. If you intend to live off-campus, it is wise to have a lease signed by early spring semester. If you intend to live on-campus, you have until December.

- **On-Campus Housing:** On-Campus housing is fully furnished, and includes basic utilities and maintenance. Many On-Campus options are convenient for getting to class, and will also involve a contract for a semester or full academic year.
- **Off-Campus Housing:** Off-Campus housing may require setting up utilities, but will allow for more independence. Renting a house with multiple people may be less expensive than living On-Campus, but will often involve a 12-month lease.

If your group decides to search Off-Campus, begin by talking with your Life Group Leader. They may know of houses that are looking to pass down their lease. You can also search using real-estate apps like Realtor.com and Zillow, or just walk around areas you'd like to live and look for rental signs! Apartments.Com is another great tool for finding an affordable apartment close to campus.

Discussion Topics

So now you've got your crew, you've got a place picked out, and are ready to sign the lease/contract! The following list contains topics you should consider discussing before everyone signs the lease.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul says we must adhere to the "brother/sister with the weakest conscience." In other words, we love by making decisions considering the person who has the greatest struggle. When thinking through and discussing these questions, consider how each person would feel safest in their personal space and strengthened their walk with God. How can you best honor your brother or sister?

1. Finances

- a. Who will be responsible for paying rent, utilities, electricity, internet/cable?
- b. How will the house share costs? Consider making a separate house account, use Splitwise, or have one person collect money for rent.



2. Community Space

- a. Will the house be a place that hosts parties and large groups?
- b. How will the house be made aware of guests?
- c. How far in advance should the house be asked about overnight guests?
- d. Will we lock the doors? When?

3. Shared Items

- a. What will be shared among the house? Think food, laundry, kitchen tools/appliances, etc.
- b. What will not be shared?
- c. What will be shared with permission?
- d. If food is shared, will there be a designated shelf or area?

4. Rooms

- a. Who will share any doubles or triples?
- b. Will rent be different for doubles/triples versus singles?
- c. How will you pick rooms? Think seniority, drawing straws, etc.

5. Alcohol

- a. Will our house be “dry”?
- b. What will we do when some are over 21 and others are underage?
- c. If there is alcohol in the house, where will it be stored?

6. Opposite Gender

- a. Will there be specific hours when people of the opposite gender can be over?
- b. Are there certain spaces where people of the opposite gender will not be allowed to hang out?

7. Cleaning

- a. What will the cleaning include? Think laundry, dishes, trash, vacuuming/sweeping, etc.
- b. How often will chores be done?
- c. How will we determine who/how we do these chores? Think chore chart, accountability, etc.
- d. How will everyone be held accountable for doing their chores?

8. Vision for Community

- a. Will we host Life Group meetings in our house?
- b. Will we establish a weekly time to connect as a house? Think house prayer or dinner, etc.
- c. How will these times be structured?
- d. When will these times be?

9. Settling Disagreements

- a. Do we want to draw up an agreement or contract?
- b. How does our house want to handle disagreements?
- c. If an agreement or expectation is violated, how will we handle it?

As with all things in college, you will get out of Christian community precisely how much you put into it. The house or apartment you live in can be exactly that: a place that you sleep and store your stuff, that other people also happen to live in. Or, if you have a house full of brothers or sisters in Christ who are committed to each other, the common values of the Christian faith, and the vision for all that the community can be, you are likely to walk away with lifelong friends and incredible memories at the end of your time together. May God bless you as you live harmoniously!