



Renting a Room  
**FROM**  
a family

**OR**

Renting a Room  
**TO**  
an Individual

**Suggested Expectations & Boundaries for**

**BOTH**

**the Owner & the Renter**

**that greatly increase your chances of success.**

The American Assumption that I need my OWN place to live has caused financial disaster for many individuals and families. As of 2011, there are **over 52 million** Americans who either rent a room from another family or live with extended family.

For two years, I rented a room from one family. When their son moved home they needed the bedroom. For another year I rented a room from another family. Both of those situations took place in the early 1980s. Both of those families are still dear friends and they still joke that they want me to come back and live with them. They were wonderful experiences.

At Liberty Church, we have members who rent a room to other members to make extra money and to help a fellow Christian. However, one church member renting a room to another church member can produce disasters if they base the rental agreement on assumptions and foolish reactions. When someone contacts our financial counseling ministry to discuss renting a room, we ask them to carefully read through this document before making any rental agreements.

There are two keys to success in renting a room. They are: 1. **Character** (*Acts 17:11, Rom. 5:4*) & 2. **Communication** (*Prov.2:3*)

## **Character**

- To rent a room **FROM** someone requires having a Servant's heart. To go out of your way to be gracious, kind, clean, patient & quiet require a humble maturity from the renter.

- To rent a room **TO** someone requires being gracious and kind, but it also requires being **SECURE**. It is **YOUR** home. It is **YOUR job** to communicate expectations.

We recommend that you both listen to the “*Expectations*” and “*Co-dependency*” cd Bible studies before renting a room.

**Chatty** Renter vs. **Quiet** Renter. We also ask you both to read the book “*Quick to Listen, Slow to Speak*”.

- ✓ Renters have to realize that the Owners are **NOT** here to be a Friend or to minister to their soul. Renters should NOT share their problems or issues with the owner. This is the quickest way for an owner to get tired of having you in their home.
- ✓ It is a character maturity point for the Renter to work hard to fit themselves into the social interactive style of the owner. I have seen situations where a renter irritated the owner by their chattiness. Some owners enjoy some pleasant conversation.
- ✓ It is better for the renter to be too quiet than to be too chatty. Most of all, it is better for the renter to be un-self-centered a great listener, perceptive, an encourager & an appreciative person in their conversation.

## Communication

All of the following subjects should be discussed and put into writing BEFORE you agree to rent a room. In this document, we will give suggestions for all of these areas, plus a sheet for you to work out your agreement in writing in renting the room.

Ultimately, you have to decide your own expectations. The more details you decide in advance the more calm the relationship.

- |                           |                                   |                                |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Month to Month Lease – | 7. TV usage                       | 13. Bathroom guidelines        |
| 2. Ending the lease       | 8. Friends in the home            | 14. Not entering certain rooms |
| 3. Parking location       | 9. Food storage                   | 15. Do Not EVER...             |
| 4. Washer & Dryer usage   | 10. Cleaning of Kitchen after use | 16. House cleaning             |
| 5. Eating in the room     | 11. Yard work                     | 17. Confidentiality & Dialogue |
| 6. Noise                  | 12. Rental Cost                   | 18. What is the Process?       |

### 1. Month to Month Lease – pay on 1

- I strongly recommend a month to month lease.
- I also recommend that you stand firm on late penalties.
  - Specifically that rent is due on the first day of every month for the upcoming month.
  - Every day that the rent is late incurs a ten dollar per day late payment penalty.
  - If a month ends with rent or late payments unpaid, then the renter automatically understands that they are expected to move out immediately.

### 2. Ending the lease without explanation

Ending a lease situation always causes tension. I recommend that you both understand that – if either the renter or owner – end the lease, that they will NOT be giving an explanation. They will simply give at least three weeks’ notice. Trying to explain why you are ending a relationship only makes the tension greater. If you both understand in advance that no explanation is given or needed, then you will have less tension.

### 3. Parking location

I recommend having a specific place and an understanding of what is expected if someone needs to move a car.

#### **4. Washer & Dryer usage**

There is nothing wrong with NOT giving a renter ANY washer and dryer privileges. A renter can go to a Laundromat.

If you do give washer and dryer privileges,

- I recommend giving two evenings per week such as Tuesdays & Thursdays from 5-10 pm when the renter can use the washer and dryer.
- I recommend being clear that the renter must supply their own laundry soap, dryer sheets etc.
- I recommend being clear that the renter is expected to remove all of their clothes, soap and laundry baskets at the end of the evening.
- I recommend that the owner make sure that all of their clothes are removed from the washer area during the times when the washer and dryer is being used by the renter.

#### **5. Eating in the room**

I recommend that you not permit eating in the room because of bugs attracted to food crumbs. If you do permit eating in the room, it would be important to insist that the renter always keep the food and eating over a plate and the plate immediately brought back to the kitchen.

#### **6. Noise**

I recommend that you discuss your normal sleeping habits and sensitivity to noise. I recommend that both parties agree to be sensitive to using headphones for music or keeping tv volume lower when others are sleeping.

#### **7. TV & Computer usage**

I recommend that you try to provide a tv connection in the room of the renter. I recommend that you permit a tv in the family room to be available for the renter if no one is using it. However, I also recommend that you be clear that – if a member of the owner's family wants to watch a show in the family room – that the renter understand that family of owners get priority on tvs in the family room.

I recommend that you try to have wireless connections available so that the renter can use a lap top in their room.

I also recommend that you do NOT permit a renter to use your lap top or desk top.

#### **8. Friends in the home**

I recommend that you NOT permit your renter to have friends in your home at ANY time.

#### **9. Storage of food in cabinets and refrigerator**

I recommend that you clear out an entire kitchen cabinet and a shelf in the refrigerator for the renter's food. The owner would agree to NEVER use the renter's food and the renter would agree to NEVER use the owner's food.

There may be times that the owner invites the renter to join them for dinner or the renter invites the owner to join them for dinner. These acts of kindness and sharing food are gifts and not expectations.

#### **10. Cleaning of kitchen & use of kitchen utensils**

I recommend that the renter be permitted to use any of the dishes and kitchen utensils.

I recommend that the owner be clear that the renter is expected to totally clean the kitchen after use including:

- all pots and pans washed clean and put away
- all dirty dishes rinsed and put in the dishwasher
- counters & table cleaned and wiped down.

#### **11. Yard work**

I recommend that yard work NOT be expected of a renter.

However, if the owner is a single mom or elderly, they may want to include yard work as part of the rental agreement. If the owner does include yard work, I recommend very clear guidelines on what yard work is expected and how often it is expected. It is wise to be clear that the grass needs to be cut twice a month –whether it seems to need cut or not. This alleviates tension on the grass getting too long.

When yard work is not expected, it allows the renter to do some yard work at various times as a surprise gift to the owner.

## **12. Rental Cost**

If you can afford to charge less, it is nice to only charge \$200 a month for a bedroom with a shared bathroom or \$300 a month for a bedroom with a private bathroom. Even if you do not need the money, it would be unwise to charge less.

## **13. Bathroom guidelines**

If a renter has a private bathroom, then the renter would be responsible for purchasing toilet paper, soap, cleaning supplies for the bathroom etc.

If the renter has a shared bathroom, then I recommend that the owner purchase these supplies.

In a shared bathroom situation, the owner would need to give some clear guidelines about:

- Leaving the bathroom clean and counters clear after each use.
- Time limitations of not spending more than 45 minutes in a bathroom at any time.

## **14. Not entering certain rooms**

I recommend that the owner commit to NOT enter the renters room or private bathroom any time unless they first ask permission.

Also, if the owner has any rooms they want kept private, they need to let the renters know up front.

## **15. Do NOT EVER...**

I recommend that you require your renter to NOT EVER **Smoke, Drink** or do **Drugs** or ask to have a **Pet**. Also, I recommend that **both** the Renter and Owner strongly commit to **NOT EVER** ask to **BORROW** items from each other. Lastly I recommend that the Owners be clear that they Renter may **NOT store** their **personal furniture** at their home. The renter can rent a storage unit for their furniture.

## **16. House Cleaning**

I recommend that the renter NOT be expected to clean the house other than keeping their room and bathroom clean and cleaning up after themselves in the kitchen.

I also recommend being clear that – when the renter’s room is not neat and clean –that the renter understand that they are expected to keep their door closed.

If the renter is not expected to help in house cleaning, then it allows the renter to help clean the house at various times as a surprise gift to the owners.

## **17. Confidentiality & Dialogue expectations**

I recommend that the owner put in writing that they expect all parties to keep all issues TOTALLY CONFIDENTIAL. Specifically neither the Owner nor the Renter will share ANY negatives with anyone, anytime but especially will not share any negatives or stress points with any Liberty Church person. There will not be any spiritualized slander with things like: *“I was just seeking my Pastor’s counsel”* or *“I was just asking my small group for prayer”*

If both the owner & renter can NOT have humble gracious dialogue that resolves various situations, then you need to graciously separate. We highly recommend the “Conflicts” series if you both want to resolve issues.

By the way, Liberty Church will NOT – at ANY time – mediate through Owner / Renter stress situations. We will help you process your expectations BEFORE you start at a very thorough level. However, once you begin, you are expected to both be mature enough to talk through your own issues.

**18. What is the Process?** If you are willing to CONSIDER renting a room to a person in Liberty Church:

- i. Please ask Pastor Tommy Stevenson [libertyfinanceministry@gmail.com](mailto:libertyfinanceministry@gmail.com) or Brandy Stevenson [libertyfinanceministry.brandy@gmail.com](mailto:libertyfinanceministry.brandy@gmail.com) to email this document to you.
- ii. Please email Pastor Tommy and Brandy to let them know you **MAY** be interested.  
*It may be 1-3 years before Pastor Tommy has someone who may need to rent a room from you.*
- iii. Whenever Pastor Tommy has a possibility of someone to rent a room from you, Pastor Tommy will **ALWAYS FIRST** talk with **you** before sending the person to you. That allows you to ask Pastor Tommy questions about the renter before Pastor Tommy sends them to you.
- iv. If you are interested, then you and the Renter would meet at your house to talk over your expectations and look at your home.
- v. If both the Renter and Owner still desire to proceed, then we ask you both to meet with one of our Financial Counselors. In this meeting, the Financial Counselor will review the expectations in detail. The Financial Counselor will ask for an emotional perspective on every single point from both the Owner and Renter. As each point brings agreement, both the Owner and Renter will initial each point.
- vi. In addition, at this meeting, the Financial Counselor will have a **ONE TIME** sharing with the Owner about the Renter’s long term plans. It helps the Owner to have a clear picture of the Renter’s long term plans. However, we also recognize that the Renter battles shame and embarrassment about their financial situation. Thus, we ask the Owner to be very sensitive to make “Future Plans” conversations a rare subject.

**1. Month to Month Lease – pay on time or pay penalties**

My preferences are

**2. Ending the lease without explanation**

My preferences are

**3. Parking location**

My preferences are

**4. Washer & Dryer usage**

My preferences are

**5. Eating in the room**

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**16. House Cleaning**

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**17. Confidentiality & Dialogue expectations**

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