

# New England roundtables



## We're Online...

We have a website now to keep you and our roundtable network up to date. Just log onto [www.neroundtables.org](http://www.neroundtables.org). We are using the site to inform you about the ministry, to share (all things evangelical) going on around New England, and to provide a resource for our roundtable members. If you have any events, links or articles you think are relevant to the evangelical scene in New England, email them to [info@roundtables.org](mailto:info@roundtables.org). We'll vet them for appropriateness and upload them as soon as we can in a timely manner (which translates into when Dennis' wife, Nancy, can grab a few minutes to update the site).



## What is a Roundtable?

*"My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love ... in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ." Colossians 2:2*

We were talking about our roundtables at our staff meeting for two last week and realized not everyone knows what a roundtable is, and particularly our application of the term. So we thought this would be a good space to outline our definition of "roundtable" and how it works out in form and function in our ministry.

First the form...

Roundtables are designed to nurture a community of learning among evangelical pastors through meaningful interaction around critical ministry issues that will lead to **more effective leadership and ministry**. The need in New England is enormous with its plethora of smaller churches and solo pastors.

Then the function...

We have a theme or relevant topic for each season of roundtables. We coordinate a four hour session once a month that integrates first, a concise and short presentation with biblical reflection, followed by facilitated interaction, assessment tools, relational connection and prayer support. We end with lunch and a lots of conversations - light, deep and deeper.

This season's theme...

"Overcoming the Tyrannies of Churchism"

Satan has a quiverful of tools (we call them tyrannies) preventing churches from healthy growth and development. We become discouraged and ineffective as pastors. This season we identify and work through ways to overcome these tyrannies (e.g., power structures, uncertain direction, chronic conflict, scarce resources, etc.)

The learning process...

Throughout the year, we look for signs of genuine learning such as the ability

- ♦ to define and identify critical "tyrannies" in our church life
- ♦ to listen/engage the topic through meaningful interaction
- ♦ to be transparent within an increasingly "safe place"
- ♦ to apply/integrate the issues to one's own ministry
- ♦ to share progress with the others in an ongoing basis

Dennis shares a coffee (Dunkin, of course, after all we **are** in New England) with Rev. Kevin Leach of West Newbury Congregational Church before one of the two roundtables that meets at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary.

## Our future plans ...

As we meet and talk with pastors and church leaders we realize there is a need for pastors roundtables in other areas of New England. Our relational networks in Connecticut, western Massachusetts and New Hampshire indicate a positive reaction to this kind of ministry, so be praying with us as we talk with pastors about future gatherings.

We also have to **work on our financial base (never a "fun" effort on our part, but unfortunately a necessity.)** For those of you who have supported this endeavor to undergird pastors in their journey, we cannot thank you enough. If you would like to help us, please fill out the card and mail to Dennis Gill, Evangelical Relations, Vision New England, 85 Constitution Lane - Suite 200A, Danvers, MA 01923. (Checks should be made out to Vision New England, with Evangelical Relations in the memo line.) Thank you for all your prayers, and loving support. We cannot tell you how much it means to us! Any questions, just give us a call.

Dennis L. Gill - Director, Evangelical Relations  
Donald H. Gill - Assistant Director, Evangelical Relations  
Vision New England



## Pray for us ...

Please join us and pray for the following events and dates. We very much rely on God's grace and mercy as we lead and connect pastors and church leadership.

**Wednesdays** - Each Wednesday there is a Pastor's Roundtable from now through June. Two are at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. Two others are "off campus" on the South Shore of Boston and our new venture in Portland, Maine. We are working in a cooperative venture with VNE and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

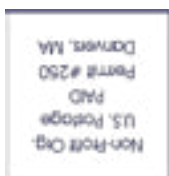
**January 15** - Liberal/Evangelical Dialogue with the Massachusetts Council of Churches

**January 22** - NECCL - New England Consultation of Church Leaders Steering Committee

**January 27** - NEEDL - New England Evangelical Denominational Leaders - We'll be looking at churches' struggles in the midst of an economic downturn. The entire day session involves 25-30 district superintendants with large and small group interaction.

**January 29** - Catholic Evangelical Dialogue

**PLUS** We are also meeting with The Summit, the leadership development arm of the Willow Creek Association, and helping them understand New England with the idea of facilitating seminars on the South Shore of Boston. Keep in mind individual conversations with pastors and church/ministry leaders throughout New England for encouragement and reference.



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