Bourbon and Books: Quick Start Guide

So, you’re interested in gathering some guys together for edifying conversation over some bourbon?

Excellent. We like you already.

Here’s how to get started:

1. Grab some bourbon and start pouring over names. Who do you know who might be interested in something like this? See if you can come up with between 3-7 other guys. (If you can’t, don’t worry. Contact Brad Bursa at [bradbursa@gmail.com](mailto:bradbursa@gmail.com) and he’ll help you.)
2. Invite the guys on your list to be part of the group. Direct them to the webpage (stgertrude.org/bourbonandbooks). See if there is interest.
3. If guys are interested, you can choose your own adventure. Either:
   1. Schedule an info meeting with Brad Bursa (email listed above). He’ll pitch the vision and answer questions the group may have.
   2. Set up your first meeting date/time and just jump in and start reading. Be sure to let Brad know that you’re taking this step, along with who all is in the group, so he can keep track of all the groups that are “out there.”

Other thoughts that might be helpful for you:

* Where do meetings take place? Meetings are hosted by one of the members of the group. The meeting could take place at the same location each time, or it can travel to a different member’s house.
* How frequent are meetings? A group should meet at least monthly. If you do, we suspect your meeting will last about 90 minutes. Some groups like to meet 2x per month, especially if members don’t know each other well and they’re just getting started. In this case, 60-minute meetings are probably right.
* Who supplies the bourbon? The Lord. Ha! The group can work this out. We recommend everyone pitching in or to set up a system where the host provides, especially if you have a different meeting location each time.
* What if the guys don’t read or don’t like reading? Well, we have to remember that the fundamental purpose of this group isn’t some sort of scholarly pursuit! That said, not reading at all or not finishing a book is not an excuse to miss a meeting. Life happens, as does a struggle to “get into” something. At the same time, we do want to encourage men to read, to think, to discuss, and to grow in wisdom and knowledge. Reading is a tried-and-true method for such a pursuit. It can also help to have some sort of ongoing chat throughout the month, or to incorporate accountability measures to help keep people honest about the reading between meetings.
* What if guys can’t afford the books? There is no obligation to purchase any of the books. We have guys who hit up the library each time, and those who check out e-books and audio books. We also have guys who buy every single book. Whatever works is what works!
* What if our group wants to meet up with guys in other groups? Well, first of all, there’s nothing stopping this from happening. Just reach out and do something together. Second, St. Gertrude will be actively working to host a larger gathering of men once or twice per year. This will be a good way for the Dominicans to offer a “common formation” to all of the men and for men to meet one another, etc. Stay tuned!