

SPAFER RoadHouses are the brainchild of Ken Forbes, who was one of the two SPAFER founders. RoadHouse meetings are simply places where people with similar interests in exploring religious issues gather to enjoy a program of common interest, usually watching a lecture on a DVD, and then having a period of discussion. The topics can vary and be set by the interests of the group. Because SPAFER is a 501(c)(3) organization located in Birmingham, Alabama, if a group is formed that uses the name "SPAFER RoadHouse" they should request permission from the SPAFER organization to use that name. SPAFER has an annual membership and regular RoadHouse attendees are encouraged to join SPAFER, but this is not required.

OFFICERS:

Officers are not required and are not necessary, but every group will need a leader, or co-coordinator, to keep the program going. From time to time others in the informal RoadHouse Group can and will take the leadership role. These RoadHouse groups are informal and will organize themselves.

ROLE OF THE LEADER:

- Organize original group
- Keep email list of all members
- Plan monthly program material
- Send notices to group members
- Find space for meetings
- Act as, or appoint, a hostess for coffee & snacks
- Arrange for lunch

MEETING DAYS & TIMES:

Saturday morning once a month seems to work best for both the Birmingham and Tupelo RoadHouses. And the 9:30 AM thru Lunch timeframe seems to also work best. Coffee and conversation is available from 9:30 on with the program starting at 10:00 AM.

FINDING MEMBERS:

SPAFER is not a religious organization as such. People who attend SPAFER meetings usually also belong and attend regular services of their particular faith. Some belong but no longer

attend, and some have no particular affiliation. You might find it difficult to have your traditional faith group sanction your meetings, be willing to spread the word about your meetings or provide space for your RoadHouse. You might try, and some might be willing to help. Word of mouth works well, plus any publicity that you can get in the local media. In Tupelo, we ran a newspaper ad for the showing of a Bishop Spong talk on DVD that we held at the Public library and picked up a few new members. If your newspaper or TV station does any regular coverage of religion you might let them know you will be a spokesperson for Progressive Christianity or Liberal Theology. Tupelo's SPAFER leader was quoted in an Easter Story in the Tupelo paper which resulted in some new members. But usually people who are seeking know others who are seeking and the word of your meetings just spreads. Sometime people will attend, but not come back because they realize that SPAFER is just not for them. But if your programs are good your group will grow. But realize that only the very dedicated will be willing to give up one Saturday morning a month for your RoadHouse meetings.

MEETING PLACES:

Birmingham's group is hosted in a private home where lunch is served after the meeting. Tupelo's meeting is held in a community conference room and the group adjourns at noon for lunch at some local restaurant. We try to go to places where we can all sit together either in a private room or area, or where tables can be pulled together. Your meeting place will need comfortable chairs and a TV with DVD and maybe on occasion a VCR player. A fast connection to the Internet would be very helpful, as many clips and whole talks are available on the Internet for free. It would also be helpful to have a large screen TV or use a video projector and screen.

PROGRAM FORMAT:

Both current Roadhouse Groups use DVD or Video programs that in effect bring prominent speakers to the group and then these presentations are followed with discussion. Leadership of the discussion is usually not necessary since everyone is attending to learn and everyone is usually eager to express opinions or ask questions.

FUNDING:

Membership in SPAFER (\$35.00 annually) is not required, but is suggested. Currently Tupelo's RoadHouse has no fee structure, however, this will be considered in the future to defray cost of the coffee, donuts and the DVD's purchased for showing. Our lunch meal is Dutch treat. Because most members of the Birmingham RoadHouse are also members of SPAFER, any cost of the monthly Birmingham RoadHouse is funded by SPAFER. However, other RoadHouses outside of Birmingham will need to work out any local funding they might need on their own, as financial help from SPAFER in Birmingham will not be available.

PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS AND MATERIALS FOR LOAN:

DVDs available for loan to SPAFER RoadHouse groups

(A \$5.00 fee is required to mail the DVD. Return postage is paid by borrower.)

List is in no particular order

1. My Favorite Universe by Neil deGrasse Tyson (12 Thirty Minute Lectures)
2. The Apostle Paul by Luke Timothy Johnson (12 Thirty Minute Lectures)
3. The Historical Jesus by Bart D. Ehrman (24 Thirty Minute Lectures)
4. St. Augustine's Confessions by William R. Cook & Ronald B. Herzman (24 Thirty Minute Lectures)
5. Growing Up in the Universe by Richard Dawkins (Five One Hour Lectures)
6. Living the Questions (21 Twenty Minute Programs by Various People)
7. Secrets of Enlightenment by Deepak Chopra (One Hour Lecture)
8. What the Bleep!? Do We Know (Movie and 3 DVD Bonus Edition)
9. A History of God (100 minutes – The History Channel)
10. Darwin's Dangerous Idea (2-hour PBS Special)
11. Galileo's Battle for the Heavens (2-hour NOVA Special on PBS)
12. Newton's Dark Secrets (1-hour NOVA Special on PBS)
13. Einstein's Big Idea (2-hour NOVA Special on PBS)
14. Jesus the Missing History (43 minutes Discovery Channel program)
15. The Dead Sea Scrolls (Discovery Channel)
16. From Jesus to Constantine by Bart D. Ehrman (24 Thirty Minute Lectures)
17. Great World Religions – Buddhism (12 Thirty Minutes Lectures)
18. Great World Religions – Judaism (12 Thirty Minute Lectures)
19. Great World Religions – Christianity (12 Thirty Minute Lectures)
20. Great World Religions – Islam (12 Thirty Minute Lectures)
21. Great World Religions – Hinduism (12 Thirty Minute Lectures)
22. Thoughts Become Things by Mike Dooley
23. The Elegant Universe – (NOVA Program on PBS)
24. Evolutionary Christianity by Michael Dowd (2 DVD Set)
25. Celebrating Evolution by Michael Dowd (2 DVD Set)
26. Thank God For Evolution by Michael Dowd (One Hour & 32 Minute Lecture)
27. Origins – 14 Billion Years of Cosmic Evolution by Neil deGrasse Tyson (2 DVD Set)
28. The First Days of Christianity (4 DVD Set – 5 hours, 20 minutes – History Channel)
29. Letting God of God by Julia Sweeney (1 hour, 30 minutes / One Woman Show)
30. The Living Matrix – Various Speakers on The New Science of Healing
31. ONE – The Movie with bonus material and interviews
32. For The Bible Tells Me So (Movie about Homosexuality)
33. The Science of Miracles by Greg Braden
34. The Cosmic Mind and the Submanifest Order of Being by Deepak Chopra

35. Jesus and the Awakening to God-Consciousness by Deepak Chopra
36. The Future of Christianity by Father Thomas Keating & Ken Weber (2 DVD Set)
37. Jesus for the Non-Religious by Bishop John Shelby Spong
38. What is Religion by Karen Armstrong (4 DVD Set / 6 Hours)
39. Emerging Voices/Emerging Church
40. The Trial of Jesus (History Channel – 50 minutes)
41. Jesus in India (Movie – 80 minutes)
42. Constantine's Sword (Movie - 95 minutes)
43. In God's Name (National Geographic Special with 12 Religious Leaders)
44. Spiritual Liberation with Michael Bernard Beckwith
45. Does God Exist? (Debate with Hitchens and Craig)
46. Collision (Debate with Hitchens and Douglas Wilson)
47. The God Delusion Debate with Richard Dawkins and John Lennox
48. Christ, Cosmology & Consciousness by Fr. Richard Rohr
49. Jesus as Liberator by Fr. Richard Rohr
50. Paul as Liberator by Fr. Richard Rohr
51. Creation as the Body of God by Fr. Richard Rohr
52. From Jesus to Christ / The First Christians – PBS Frontline Program
53. God in America / How Religious Liberty Shaped America – PBS 6-Hour Series
54. Harmony in Diversity / How to Move from Conflict to Compassion by The Dalai Lama
55. The Unknown Jesus – A&E TV program