

Keep Those Visitors Coming Back (Part 2)

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Everyone is looking for something, which is why your church has visitors. Some are looking for a place that has a strong youth program for their kids. Others are looking for hand-outs or financial assistance. Some are looking for counseling or emotional support. Others are looking to satisfy a pricked conscience since they have been absent from a church setting for so long. Some are simply looking for a place that will teach the truth of God's Word. Others are simply looking for a place that will *not* teach the truth of God's Word (at least in its entirety).

Everyone is looking for something, but not everyone is looking for the right thing. Jesus faced this same problem. He once said to a crowd, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you" (John 6:26-27, ESV).

You want your visitors to come back - but for the right reasons. Because not everyone is looking for the same thing, you must decide what *kind* of visitor you want back: those who are searching for physical bread, or those who are searching spiritual bread?

Part 2 of [how to keep your visitors coming back](#) continues:

6. Preach the Word...

I am convinced that people *crave* God's Word. They want it to make sense. They want it to provide clarity to their lives. They want to go deeper than just the surface-level Sunday school curriculum they had growing up.

Let's get something straight: **If you want to grow a church the right way, God must do it.** If you want to grow in number, God must do it (1 Cor. 3:6). If you want to grow in faith, God must do it (Rom. 10:17). If you want to grow in passion, God must do it (Rom. 10:2). Therefore, if you want the *right kind of* visitor to keep coming back, you must focus on the Word.

...with conviction. The preaching at your church should *ooze* conviction. You should literally hunger for the hearing and telling of the Word. Visitors need to see you really believe this stuff. This Christianity thing you practice isn't something cold, dead, or lifeless. This isn't some mere tradition or heritage you're a part of. "*This is a church,*" people should think, "*that knows Jesus and His New Testament contain the very words of life*" (cf. John 6:68).

...with clarity. None of this mumbo-jumbo of modern Christendom. Sin needs to be called "sin," and righteousness needs to be called "righteousness." Make sure God's Word is made clear. God has something to say about issues people care about; it is clear about matters like salvation, addiction, morality, marriage, sexuality, parenting, and finance. When people leave your church, they should leave with answers to their problems, not added confusion to their problems.

...with courage. In the words of Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16). That "gospel," by the way, isn't just the mere fact that Jesus died for our sins and was resurrected. That "gospel" is the sphere of Jesus' teachings in its entirety. Don't just preach the easy stuff - preach the hard stuff too!

...with personality. Unless most of the people in the audience are wearing pocket protectors, stop making the teaching at your church as boring and monotone as possible. Preach like a real person. Show your humanity. Talk to people with real-life problems like you would actually talk to them. Don't just lecture. Cut out the flowery religious language. Make the Word relevant to the audience.

7. Show you care

You're not present at the church assembly just to punch your time card, are you? You're there because you want to encourage and be encouraged (Heb. 10:24-25). You're there because you want to make sure there is no one in need (Acts 4:34). You're there because you want to train your young people in the way of the Lord (Prov. 22:6).

Show that you care about your visitor because he/she has a soul, not because they he/she has a body with a wallet in their pocket or purse. Show that you care about their children and that you want to instill in them a love for the Bible.

8. Be willing to get messy

Visitors sometimes come to you with problems. Emotional problems. Financial problems. Marital problems. Abuse problems. Addiction problems. Health problems. How will you handle this?

Do you hope only the visitors with little baggage come back? Do you avoid the tough questions because you fear the answers? Do you often think, "Someone other than me can deal with this person"?

Perhaps visitors aren't coming back because you're too busy sitting at the head of your self-righteous, cowardly table and don't have the time to serve those who actually need the gospel (cf. Luke 14:12-24; 22:24-27).

The one thing we all have in common is a sin problem; all problems can ultimately be traced back to sin. And Christ is the answer to sin. Whether or not you are willing to get involved in the messiness of other people's lives comes down to whether or not you believe that. Jesus said, "I said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

9. Show that you're the church of Christ 24/7, not just for a few hours on Sunday

People want something that is bigger than the square footage of a church building - they want a church *family*. They want community. They want people to check in on, think about, help, eat dinner with, joke around with, encourage, and sympathize with throughout the

week. They want “day by day” Christianity (Acts 2:46), not just 3-hours-a-week Christianity. In other words, they want 1st century Christianity - not the convenient, one-stop-shop Christianity of the 21st century.

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