

Guest Evangelism

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Assembly

Introduction:

I Corinthians 14:23-25 explains one of the goals of our assemblies. We hope our guests learn quickly and easily that God is among us. Evangelism, therefore, has been one of the aspects of Christian assemblies from the very beginning of Christ's church. With that in mind, about two years ago, we began one of our most important works. We determined to purposefully and consciously work on evangelizing our guests. We should certainly continue talking to our friends, family, co-workers and neighbors. We should certainly continue knocking doors, talking to people in lines and inviting checkers at stores. But we must not overlook those who are already interested enough to attend one of our assemblies whether they have come on their own or at the invitation of one of our members.

It is past time for us to reassign roles for our guest evangelism. Additionally, we have new members who aren't aware of the work we are doing. Therefore, I think it is important for us to once again, review our work in this area, go over the roles and let everyone sign up for the role they would like to fill for a six month period.

Discussion:

I. Attention to Guests

A. **James 2:1-4** explains a very important principle about our guests. We are to be impartial. It doesn't matter if our guests are rich or poor, black or white, male or female, Christian or non-Christian, like us or different from us, we are to treat them with decency and respect impartially. As such, we want to go out of our way to make sure every guest is treated as an honored guest.

B. The three goals of our Guest Evangelism

1. *Guest reception:* We want every guest to feel welcome. We want them to feel at home. This is why I refer to those who visit with us as guests. Have you ever noticed museums have visitors who drop in and leave? Hotels and restaurants, service oriented industries, have guests. We are about service. We want people to feel at home, not feel as though they have dropped in and are ready to leave.
2. *Guest information:* We want every guest to have all the information they need. We want to anticipate their needs, letting them know where the restrooms and nurseries are. We want to help them find the classes they need and understand the order of our classes and assemblies. We must remember the order we take for granted is wholly new to our guests. Further, we want to give them information about the congregation. We want to let them know who and what we are. Therefore, we have developed a guest packet to introduce them to us as a congregation. Finally, we want to retrieve information from them. We cannot let them know how much we appreciated their visit without learning their mailing address or other pertinent information. Therefore, we want to invite them to fill out one of our guest cards and we want to make sure to get that back to them.
3. *Guest follow-up:* When appropriate, we want to follow-up with our guests. We do so in four appropriate ways. First, we immediately e-mail our guest so that by the time they get home, they already have an expression of our gratitude in their e-mail box. Second, we send them letters and cards. Our ladies work groups have continued to do an outstanding job accomplishing this. Third, when appropriate we have a couple of our members drop by for a five-minute stay on the porch visit to express our appreciation and invite them back again. Fourth, we have those who call before the next Sunday to invite them to our next assemblies. In time, we hope to have at least a quarterly newsletter to mail to our guests to let them know what is going on in the congregation. For those who are repeated guests, we strive to invite them into our homes so we can get to know them better and offer studies as needed. Our goal here is to help all our guests come to Christ or grow in Christ.

II. The Roles—Please give consideration to where you will fit best—All of these roles are filled for six month intervals.

A. *Prayers:* **Acts 11:21** demonstrates if we will have success we must have the Lord's hand with us. Therefore, the backbone of everything we do is inviting God to build this house. As such, we have established two prayer groups, a men's group and a women's group. Hopefully, everyone

will pray regularly for our guests and our growth. But these two groups meet specifically on Sunday night following our assembly to have a time of prayer, specifically mentioning our guests by name and praying for our further work in evangelism.

- B. *Greeters/Escorts*: Obviously, every one of us needs to keep our eyes open. If we see a guest in the parking lot, the foyer, the classroom or auditorium, we must not wait for someone else to talk to them, we need to do it. Keep **James 2:1-4** in mind as we strive to honor our guests. However, we specifically assign people to greet and escort our guests. This role is designed to welcome guests and to facilitate the exchange of information. Everyone is to greet our guests. But these assigned members are to make sure our guests receive the guest packet, are asked to fill out our guest card, know the layout of our facilities and can find their way to the appropriate class. (Please understand, if you are not comfortable talking to strangers, do not feel obligated to sign up for this role. We have plenty of roles for all personality types.) Do not underestimate the impact getting this role filled has on our guests. Several of us have heard specifically from guests about how friendly the congregation is and what an impact that makes on them.
- C. *Card Distributors*: At the end of each assembly and class, we need those who will collect the guest cards, copy them and distribute them in the system of boxes we have in the library. This job is very simple, but it must be done quickly and consistently.
- D. *Databasers*: This is one area we have slacked up on. However, the database is now ready and has been worked on the past few months and we are now ready to start tracking the work we have done in this area. We need someone to fill in the information regarding our guests and the follow-up info with them in a database. We want to keep track of the number of guests we have had and the work we have done to follow-up with them.
- E. *E-mailers*: We like to have at least three people who will follow-up with an e-mail to each of our guests, thanking them for their attendance. If they are local, we will use the e-mail to invite people to be our guest again. One of the issues that is a must on this role is at least one person is to pick up the guest cards and, using the computer in the workroom, is to send out an e-mail to each guest immediately following the assembly they attended. We want our guests to get home, check their e-mail and already have a note in their inbox from us thanking them for being here.
- F. *Letter and Card Writers*: Our ladies groups have been doing a fine job writing letters and cards to our guests. This is another means by which we let guests know how much we appreciate them and provide an invitation for local guests to attend with us again.
- G. *5-minute visitors*: Within 48 hours of a guest attending with us, we want someone to simply drop by their home and let them know we appreciated them attending with us. These visits should last no longer than 5 or 10 minutes. Further, even if invited in, these visitors should remain on the porch, simply express thanks for attending and leave.
- H. *Phone Callers*: Beginning on Thursday, we have those who follow-up with our local guests giving them a phone call to express our appreciation for their visit and to invite them to attend on the following Sunday. The call does not have to be long, but it does need to be gracious.
- I. *Hospitality*: When someone has attended several times, we want to get to know them better. As such, we need people who are willing to invite guests into their home. I stress, that we do prefer this to be an in-home hospitality. It is more meaningful, more hospitable and more conducive to getting to know people when they are in your home.

III. Making guest evangelism work.

- A. *Put others first*: **Philippians 2:4** explains that we must look out for the interests of others before our own interests. If any of us are going to be involved in any aspect of this work, we have to have this attitude. Too easily we can be lost in our own little world, focused on our own work and not thinking about others at all. I know I am often guilty of this. However, to work this plan, we have to put others before ourselves, especially putting our guests before ourselves. Too easily we take for granted everything that goes on here and we give no thought for those who come in to our midst as strangers. We need to make sure we put them before ourselves, making sure they feel welcome and comfortable. This may mean waiting to talk to one of our friends until after we have greeted guests. It may mean letting a guest sit in our "assigned seat" without complaint. In any event, if we are focused on self, we won't work this plan well. We must be focused on others. If we put others first, it will mean sacrifice, which leads to our next point.

- B. *Personal Sacrifice*: Even though the great majority of this work takes place at our assemblies, we need to understand that it will take sacrifice. I know when the assembly is done, we are ready to beat the Baptists to lunch. But we may have to sacrifice our early arrival at the local restaurant in order to greet guests. Or we may have to give up some time talking with our friends to run to the computer to send off an e-mail. Writing letters and notes, making phone calls and visits means sacrificing time even during the week. But think of the work we are accomplishing. This is part of saving and edifying souls. For we who are supposed to be living sacrifices (**Romans 12:1**), making these little sacrifices to bring souls to God should be easy.
- C. *Impartiality*: We have already mentioned this point as we started the lesson. However, I think it needs to be highlighted again. **James 2:1-4** explains that we must not be concerned about socio-economic status. We must sacrifice and put others first whether they are rich or poor, black or white, Republicans or Democrats, male or female, etc. Whether they dress like us or not, we should impartially welcome them. Whether they have earrings, nose rings, tattoos, baggy pants, spiked hair or look just like us, we need to show them the love and welcome of God. If they look or speak a little oddly, we still need to show them the love and welcome of God.

Conclusion:

According to **I Corinthians 3:5-9**, God is the one who will provide the increase. However, He provides us with opportunities to work on that increase. We all can play a part in this work. We need you to be involved. Please, sign up to be part of this work and watch God work through us.