
HELPING VISITORS TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Session Description

You've ratcheted up your hospitality, so your first time visitors are returning, but what's next? Studies show that if a guest hasn't developed significant relationships within the church within six to nine months, odds are you'll lose them. How can you help these returning guests get connected into your congregation? In this week's Church-Talk, Drs. Bill and Kris join Chris Walker, the Evangelism Coach, in a discussion of helping guests make connections by offering low-commitment opportunities.

Session Outline

A visitor becomes a returning guest when they've made a connection with the church in some way. They resonate with the worship style; they were entranced by the sermon; they felt exceptionally comfortable; etc.

Studies show that returning guests will drift away if they haven't made at least one significant relationship (friend) in the church within six to nine months.

Churches often make the mistake of depending on their Sunday School as their primary connecting tool. Only rarely will younger adults make the commitment to a two-plus hour church outing on Sunday mornings. In addition, although most Sunday School classes believe they are "friendly," if the class has been in existence for more than four to six weeks, it should be considered a "closed" class that will be exceptionally difficult for a visitor to feel like a part of the group.

Chris Walker, the Evangelism Coach (EvangelismCoach.com) joins us to share his experience as a visitor turned returning guest. The difficulty he and his family had breaking into the church is indicative of the connection problems in established churches.

Discussion Questions

1. How does your church get contact information from visitors? What does it do with the information once it has it?
2. Describe your church's follow-up program when a guest visits and provides their contact information.
3. Approximately how many of your church's first-time guests return and become involved?
4. Does your church have a specific process for helping guests get connected? How is this communicated to visitors?
5. What low commitment connecting opportunities does your church offer?