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# ***WHAT TO DO WHEN: YOU HAVE NO VISITORS***

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## **Session Description**

A too common cry from congregations is “But we don’t have any visitors,” which is often followed by a perceived observation that “everyone is moving out” or “nobody is moving in.” Believe it or not, unless you’re Detroit (where street after street after street is filled with vacant houses) new people are moving into neighborhoods and even the smallest of communities. If you’re not seeing any visitors, there’s something more afoot than people beat-footing it away or choosing to foot it into other communities. In this session Drs. Bill and Kris look at what a congregation can – needs? – to do when a congregation faces the reality of *no visitors*.

## **Session Outline**

A lack of visitors is nearly always the result of an internal problem and/or an external problem.

### *Internal Problems*

- Conflict
- Lack of significant relationships among those in the congregation
- Irrelevant to less-than-well-churched people
- Embarrassment
- Low congregational self-esteem
- Misunderstanding or denial of community’s demographics
- Lack of encouragement and/or practical (read that *easy-to-use*) tools for inviting
- Pastor and congregation is member-focused

### *External Problems*

- Congregation has a bad reputation
- Members who “act out” in public (particularly in small communities)
- No one’s talking about your church
- Nobody knows where you are
- Congregants’ have a lack of significant relationships outside the congregation
- Pastor has a lack of significant relationships outside the congregation

## **What you can do**

- Address conflict, especially pointing out the impact it’s having on your congregation’s ability to attract and want to invite visitors
- Evaluate every aspect of your worship service(s), ministries, and missions for relevance
- Identify, address, and reverse the reasons your congregation is failing to invite guests: sense of disconnection, embarrassment, lack of encouragement, absence of practical tools and suggestions about how to use them.

- Get your congregation's name into the paper, onto the radio, and up in the webisphere (in a good way!!!)
- Contact your school district, utilities and public works department, sheriff's department, police department, Chamber of Commerce, or local state representative to determine who is, and where they are, moving into your community (NOTE: *not* where they're moving out from!)
- Get your pastor out of member care and church administration and into networking with your target audience

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Which internal and/or external circumstances account for the reasons your congregation isn't seeing visitors
2. What can you do?
3. What do you need to do?
4. Who will do what (don't put all this on your minister or staff!!!!)?
5. When will you do what?
6. What will you do next?