

Attitude is Everything!



Do your ushers smile when worship guests approach? Will they take the time to say, "Good morning, welcome to Faith Fellowship Church. We're glad you're here?" A simple greeting like that can make the difference to someone who steps off the street. A while ago, I spoke with a man that had gone back to church after being away for many years. As he revealed his story, he told me how much courage it took for him to walk up the steps to his "old church." For years, he had been away from church enjoying the "good life" and putting very little thought on anything besides a good time on Saturday night. It was not until he began to have health problems that prevented him from working that he decided to visit church. He described that first Sunday morning as the most difficult. He had to face people who possibly knew him and knew he had not been there. To his surprise, the first face he saw removed all of the anxiety and fear he had. The very first person he saw was an old high school friend who was an usher. Her initial response was a huge grin and warm embrace with the words, "I'm so glad to see you." At that moment, he knew he was home. As I remember his story, I cannot help but wonder what your ushers would say if they saw a long lost friend return to church?

Attitudes impact first impressions. How we respond to people during the very first moments of a visit can make a significant impact on their entire impression. Everybody has a story. Some first-time visitors are church shopping; while others have been meaning to attend worship but years slipped by without a visit. Regardless of the story, each first time guest comes to the doors of the church not knowing how they will be greeted. A warm hello, a friendly smile or a simple

"welcome" can be all that's needed to bring that individual closer to Christ. I must ask the question again, are the doors of your church warmly open?

Large or small, take a close look at how you welcome guests on Sunday. Take the time to train the ushers and greeters who are likely the first impression team. Be sure they know the things that matter most when a person walks in. Leading up to the holidays:

- *Smile!*
- *Always speak first with a warm greeting.*
- *Give eye contact and a friendly face.*
- *Greet unfamiliar faces with Christian Love.*
- *When in doubt ask yourself, "What would Jesus do?"*



Start Connecting on Sunday!

"Good morning, my name is ____." Sound familiar? At warm, friendly, growing congregations you may hear this introduction often. Congregations that connect with new comers have members that introduce themselves and begin to uncover information about the new comer that may connect to current members. Let me take the above dialogue further. After the introduction a member may ask, "Are you new to the area? The visitor might respond, "Yes, I am from Hawaii." Immediately the opportunity to start connecting begins. It is that simple.

Finding common ground is an easy way to assist in the formation of new friendships and relationships. It is also an easy way to begin to integrate new people into a congregation. We are all meant to have friends. Helping people discover others that share their interests help to make the church even more relevant to needs.

Connecting common ground requires making an effort to get to know new people and uncover the connectors. As I think about how this happens in many congregations, these ideas come to mind.

- **Create Greeter Script.** Arm greeters with what to say to Sunday guests and how to find out enough information to connect them to members of the church.
- **Assign members with outgoing personalities to the greeter roles.** Seek members who like to meet people to serve as connectors or greeters for newcomers.
- **Inventory your congregation and identify the common connectors.** Common connectors can include hobbies, home towns, schools, children's ages, profession, neighborhood, previous denomination and the list goes on.
- **Give people opportunity to connect.** Host brief receptions following worship service so that members and guests have time to talk.
- **Be on new face alert!** Get members in the habit of seeking out guests and talking with them even before talking with members.
- **Connect, Connect, Connect!**



A Search for Common Ground

Have you ever walked into a room full of strangers? How did you strike conversation? Recently I conducted a workshop with a room full of strangers. Many of the people did not know each other and none of them knew me. However, we all left as friends. How? I would say it had a lot to do with finding *common ground*. From finding out we had friends in common to realizing that some of us did not like sushi our conversations uncovered our likeness.

Common ground as I define it is that place where we connect in our "likeness" In other words, *common ground* may be the home town we're from or the high school we attended or the fact that we both like a specific football team. Whatever the spot, *common ground* opens us up to the possibility for friendships.

Several months I had a conversation with a young man in his 20's. He was assisting me as I checked out of the hotel. I told him that I often speak with church leaders about ways to reach young adults. I then asked him what he would suggest I share to older adults who may want to reach younger generations, his answer..."Common Ground." He suggested that we take the time to talk to people and find out who they are and what they like. Then he said we could introduce people to people who share that common ground.

The more I talk to young adults, the more I realize how we can all benefit from this young man's advice about common ground. If we take the time to uncover our likeness we can surely build new friendships that cross ages, genders, marital status and cultures.

As a people-person, I enjoy connecting people. In talking with some of the people I coach, I learned that this is a gift. To help those of us who may be somewhat shy

in reaching out to people especially those that are not in our generation, here's a short list of tips. These may be real helpful for ministry leaders who want to reach out on Sunday mornings:

- Smile and be willing to talk
- Be open to share your hobbies and interests
- Listen for clues that may link newcomers to other members
- IPTOP= Introduce People To Other People!

It really can be that simple. What are ways you connect people to one another?