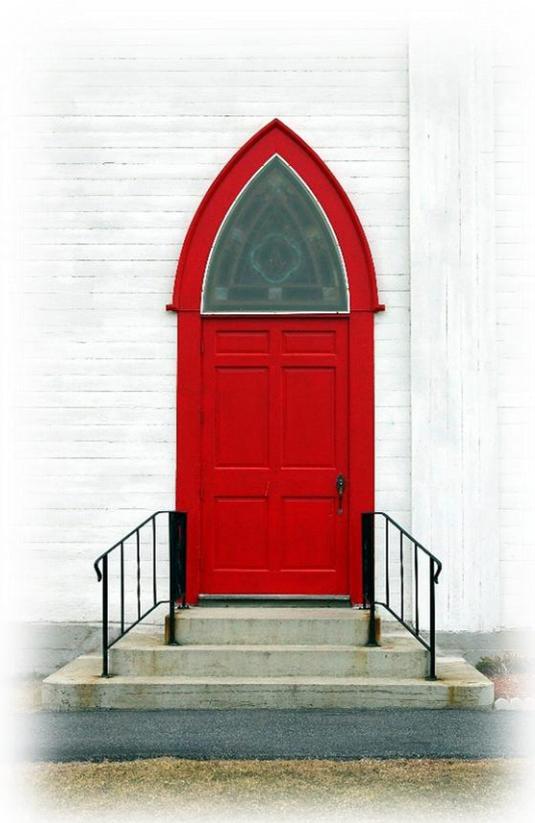


## Reasons You May Not See Some Visitors Again!



Congregations often wonder why some worship service visitors come only one time. Getting guests back for a second trip has some pastors and ministry leaders baffled. Research studies indicate that people decide whether they will ever return during the early moments of a worship service visit. This sometimes before the pastor gets up to preach.

First time visitors notice a lot within the first moments of impression. From what happens in the parking lot to the pews, the first impression can shape a visitor's

feeling about a church visit. Did anyone speak? Was it confusing on where to enter the sanctuary? Although worship experiences may vary by faith tradition, some of the biggest reasons first-time visitors may not come back happens within the early moments of arrival.

What do visitors really notice when they visit for the very first time? This question may be on the minds of many church leaders as they see empty pews after a holiday. Here is a starter list of common reasons visitors may not come back. Addressing items on this list may help to create a welcoming church that gets repeat visits. These 15 items listed were generated from multiple conversations with first-time visitors across faith traditions:

1. No welcome from the parking lot to the pews.
2. Finding the right door to sanctuary appeared difficult.
3. Members in the pews held on to their “good seats.”
4. Too many words seemed like “churchy insider words” throughout the worship experience.
5. No safe, clean nursery for the babies and little ones.
6. No welcoming and sincere greeting extended by pastors or members.
7. No warmth or hospitality extended.
8. Missing joy and a spiritual atmosphere.
9. No sense of Christian love and family in the church community.
10. Very limited reaching out to people who are not members or strangers.
11. Very few ministries or activities for youth or children.
12. Public recognition of worship service visitors that left them feeling uncomfortable or awkward
13. Appears to be no obvious vision or purpose for the congregation.
14. On Sunday morning, members and ushers seem focused on “in-house, member only” conversations.
15. No one invited them back.

### **What can your congregation do to be more welcoming?**