

Conserving Church Visitors (Part Three)

As it was stated in parts one and two of “Conserving Church Visitors,” if a church is to grow consistently, it must have visitors. And those visitors must return. If this is to happen, the names and addresses of church visitors must be secured and utilized in follow-up in order to begin building relationships and friendships with the new people. In this issue of the ChristWay Ministries newsletter, we would like to suggest one more way to secure names, addresses, and other helpful information from the visitor.

A growing number of churches are exploring ways to alter their worship services in order to allow them to gather information at the end of the service. The scenario looks something like this: The music, drama, testimony component of the service is divided and planned to take place on both sides of the sermon. In a one-hour worship service (the author recommends one hour and 15 minutes as a more effective length) there would be a 15-minute singing and participation component followed by a 30-minute message. Then, a 15-minute segment of additional music, a specific application invitation and the offering would conclude the service. This offers a planned opportunity to respond to the Spirit of God, allowing the pastor to pray for the people in an informal way, and arranging follow-up contacts as requested or appropriate. The filled-in cards or bulletin tear-offs are simply collected with the offering.

These growing churches have found that by providing a “decision” card or tear-off portion of the bulletin that is worded to provide response options for the congregation, everyone is involved and visitors feel welcome to fill out the forms as well. This necessitates that some portion of the form is written each week to specifically reflect the application of the message and invite people to respond. For example, a sermon on Bible study could include offers of study helps, a yearly reading schedule, or an opportunity to sign up for a class on personal Bible study methods. A sermon sharing the gospel can provide a box to check in order to learn more about having a personal relationship with Christ.

Benefits to this approach include:

- People can actively respond to the sermon
- Everyone can participate and thus include visitors
- Visitors feel more at ease sharing personal information
- The church has good and usable information to utilize in prayer support, pastoral care, and follow-up of visitors.

We hope these brief ideas prove helpful to many who read the ChristWay Ministries newsletter. If you missed parts one and/or two, we would be happy to email them to you upon request. We are eager to serve the churches as God may provide.

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