

“Invite Time”

Introduction:

- New series - started last Sunday, and
 - What time is it?GAME TIME
- Last week talked about Urgent/ Critical Time in the life of the Church, especially in US
 - “The Great Opportunity”. Church in decline
- It’s GameTime for the Church, but
 - The Church seems to have lost its EXCITEMENT
 - The Church seems to have forgotten it’s MISSION, despite our excitement level: to help get as many people as possible on Team Jesus
 - The Church seems to have lost its (balls) courage
 - There is a world in need of RESCUE
 - Church needs to grow...so the KINGDOM grows! (bottom line)
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- Prophetic Word this past week - we are gonna grow!
 - Received this past week
 - Front end of awakening (Revival)
 - Pastor who gave the word is excited that he lives close!!!
 - God’s got a plan for His Bride, the Church, and He calls us to partner with Him to grow this church
 - We gotta do Our part, as talked about last week
 - Multiplication= Kingdom principle
 - 400- Outpost, 150- Ebenezer

Carey Nieuwhof: The majority of churches are in decline, and 94% of all churches are losing ground against their community (that is, their community is growing faster than the church is). **Definitely true for Jackson County (stats?) Top 10 fastest growing county; Jefferson - fastest growing mircopolitan (small town) last 2 years in the country!**

We’re gonna grow - how?

Worship Note: The #1 factor that drives church growth is Personal Invitation.

1. Personal Invitation

Personal invitation fuels church growth (and discipleship).

A great social media presence is important, as are services unchurched people can access.

But at the heart of it all, in almost every growing church is this: *people inviting their friends*.

Conversely, if your church members don't invite their friends, don't expect to grow.

Tension: Truth is, most of us have a hard time when it comes to inviting people to church...we don't know what to say; we don't want to 'offend' anybody or assume their religious preference; ; honestly, some people don't feel like their church is worth inviting anyone to...that's a whole nother discussion! Sidenote: You should probably want to invite people to the church you attend, or maybe you're not in the right church? Sometimes, we think we have to know everything about the Bible and theology; or what if we invite somebody and they don't show up?? We don't want people to think we're 'Jesus freaks'. Maybe we just have never done it before and it seems terrifying

VIDEO

So the Number one growth tactic is Invite

- What time is it? INVITE TIME

What time is it?? INVITE TIME!

In actuality, invitation is simple and easy - you're just 'recruiting people to come and see, just to try it out', and the work of salvation belongs to the Lord - all the pressure is on Him, not you

- The Holy Spirit is the vehicle of rescue - convincing / convicting people of the truth
- **Worship Note:** An **invitation** is simply asking someone **come and see**.
- To test it out - there's no pressure or no obligation
- - like the way like 30 days to try out a car - Carvana...
- Dealerships like Carmax will let you try it out before purchasing
 - When comes to church, just asking to try it out - not on you whether or not the like it or 'buy in' - there is a 'right fit' for most people when it comes to church - this church may not be it - and that's ok - our call is to extend the invitation

John 1:35-50 New International Version (NIV)

John's Disciples Follow Jesus

35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. [It was about four in the afternoon. [Imagine spending the day with Jesus...take time to paint that picture]

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him [SO EXCITED, BUBBLING OVER like the people we talked about last week who saw Jesus heal a guy and Jesus told them not to, but they couldn't help it! Andrew can't help it - runs to his brother] "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. [Expound here? Andrew EXCITED~]

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter^[a]).

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." [Chad Norris: Main Command of the Bible is 'follow me', not...

- Few times Jesus says 'believe in me', many times he says "follow me"

- Belief is base camp, but if we want to go to the pinnacle we must 'Follow'
- Jesus didn't ask them what their theology or doctrine was, just a simple invite to come with him!

44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46 "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

[Come and See - not complex, no theological debate or doctrinal exposition, just 'come and see'...Tryout...Can anything good come from Jackson County??

47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." [purity] [wow, not a small compliment...]

48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." [Word of knowledge= gift of the Holy Spirit]

49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel." [now some theology :), didn't come from Jesus or Philip (the inviter) came from the invitee (Nathanael) - prophetic word]...job of the Spirit to convict and teach truth of Jesus

50 Jesus said, "You believe^[b] because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." [another 'wow' moment... and he did!, Future, saw the things that Jesus did and was able to point others to

Jesus]...Nathanael ended up being part of great awakening in Biblical time - we can be part of the Awakening God is doing right now in Jackson County, but we gotta invite.

What time is it? INVITE TIME!

- Nathanael was invited to 'come and see' Jesus and he was able to be a part of something amazing and incredible!
- What if Philip hadn't invited him? For most of us, we came to church / Jesus because of a personal invitation [80% of unchurched will come and see if asked]
- How did you first end up at church?
 - Grew up in church?
 - Brent- grew up, saved at a youth group that I was invited to
 - YOUTH INVITE is important!!!!

INVITE JOB OF EVERYONE ALREADY ON TEAM JESUS

- Like the coach doesn't go out and play every position during a game, a pastor's role is not to 'play every position' but to coach up and encourage others to play their part. NONE are exempt from the role of 'Inviter'
- Bigger picture= not about people coming to this church or any church, it's about Jesus and the need of people to be rescued
 - if we believe Jesus is the way, the truth, the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him, inviting people is the most compassionate, caring thing we can do...people are need of Rescue

Worship Note: Invite is not about **recruitment**, it's about **rescue**.

- Soccer team rescue in Thailand...
 - Concerned about the rescue of people half the world away. Are we concerned about the people 5 miles away?
 - What were people willing to do to save those boysAnything
 - Jesus is calling us to save others, be willing to do anything
 - We are NOT asking you to have all the answers or have all the theology figured out - that's our job, and the job of the Holy Spirit
 - We ARE asking you - as a member of Team Jesus - to extend an invitation for people to come and see - to try it out - to extend a lifeline...

Easy ways to invite:

- Share posts and events - EASY invite!
- Check in every week, **let people know where you go**
- How to invite:
 - What you up to this week-end?

- Hey, you guys go to church somewhere.?
 - I go to church at X, I think you'd like it - come try it out
- Sometimes it is good to have something 'in your hand' CARDS
- Prevenient Grace- your invite could be 'God's timing'
- Project GameTime
 - Working on rolling out a door-to-door front porch invite plan

Guidance for Life's Adventure:

Coach Gilstrap Pep Talk