



Announcements

On Easter Sunday March 27 we will have a special guest speaker, Dr. P.G. Vargis at APC Central. We encourage you to visit and receive through this veteran missionary statesman and leader in God's Kingdom:

Dr. P.G. Vargis and his wife Lilly have served as pioneer missionaries in North India. In 1972, they founded Indian Evangelical Team which has grown rapidly and is today one of the most effective pioneer mission forces in South East Asia. It has birthed more than 27 church planting movements in various regions of South East Asia, focusing on saturation church planting. It trains hundreds of called indigenous men and women to be effective and godly church planters and Christian leaders through its regional Bible schools and leadership training center.

Exhortation before Declaration

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

Sunday March 06, 2016

Invite and Pray

Part 1 in the series on: How To Win Souls And Make Disciples

The Lord Jesus has commissioned us to go preach the Gospel, win souls and make disciples. We are familiar with these Scriptures:

Mark 16:15

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Matthew 28:19,20

**19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.**

Why share the Gospel?

Because everybody needs a Saviour and God has provided for every person's salvation in Jesus Christ.

Over the next 4 Sundays (excluding Easter Sunday) as part of this sermon series we are going to share 4 simple strategies to win souls.

Now our commission is not only to win souls but also to make disciples. So as we progress in this series, we will also talk about how to disciple new believers.



Strategy #1 : Invite and Pray

Our Text: John 1:35-51

In this passage we see three cases where people are encouraged to encounter Jesus.

1:35-39 :

John the Baptist points to Jesus with the simple words "behold the Lamb of God". Two of his people go to Jesus to find out for themselves. The Lord Jesus welcomes them and reveals who He is. Andrew is one of them.

1:40-42 :

Andrew finds his brother Peter, tells him about Jesus and brings him to where Jesus is. The Lord Jesus ministers to Peter, reveals his future and Peter now becomes a follower of Jesus.

1:45-51 :

After Philip meet Jesus, he goes to find his friend Nathanael and tell him about whom he has met. Nathanael is skeptical about Jesus. Philip does not attempt to convince him, but simply says "come and see". Three simple but powerful words for an invitation. When Nathanael comes to meet Jesus, he has a powerful encounter. Jesus demonstrates supernatural revelation which convicts Nathanael and makes him a follower of Jesus Christ.

So,

Strategy #1 : Invite and Pray

Invite people, give them the opportunity to encounter and explore Jesus for themselves. Pray for the Lord to reveal Himself to them powerfully.

Realize the power of a single invitation

Think about Andrew introducing Peter to Jesus.

Peter went on to become a great apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Invite people to explore Jesus. There are literally many ways we can do this.

Think of various situations that people go through which provides an opportunity where you can invite them to explore Jesus:

- They are facing a challenge in life
- They are asking questions about life and purpose
- They are interested in learning/exploring



- They are thankful/grateful for good things
- They are open to receiving prayer for some need

Think of the various events and places you can invite people to explore Jesus:

- To church
 - on a regular Sunday
 - on BIG SUNDAY is our Sunday especially geared for new people
 - Special days: Good Friday, Easter, Christmas, New Year's Eve
 - A special sermon series at Church
 - a VIP Banquet/brunch/lunch happening after Service
- Your life group or a special evening at your life group
- A special movie you'd like to watch at your own home
- A wedding, birthday or even a Christian funeral of a common friend
- A youth event, a marriage, a parenting, a leadership or workplace seminar, a Men's conference, a women's conference, a Kid's conference, youth camp, church camp.
- An church outreach event

Think of various conversation starters that could lead to you presenting an invitation to explore Jesus:

- Share your own personal experience with the Lord or something specific to a similar situation you have been through
- Offer to pray for them or with them
- Share an encouraging verse of Scripture (in a person, a SMS, an email, a book mark, etc.)
- Give them a Christian book
- Give them a Christian music CD

Inviting people to church is ONE of the MANY WAYS you extend an invitation for people to meet Jesus.

Most surveys agree that the strongest motivating factor for people to come to a worship service or other church event would be the personal invitation from a family member or friend. A more general church invitation from an unfamiliar source: like a phone call, a flier, emailer, has significantly lesser impact.



What holds us back from extending an invitation to people to explore Jesus (and/or to come to church)

Sometimes we are too self-conscious and so don't invite people

Don't let your lack of experience, your own personal challenges, personal flaws, limitations, imperfections hold you back from inviting people. You are not inviting people to yourself - but inviting them to explore Jesus, who is all Perfect.

Sometimes we are afraid to face rejection, 'they may say NO!', so we don't invite people

We cannot control people's response. That is outside our control. We can only do the inviting.

Sometimes we are afraid that others may perceive us differently, we may lose their friendship, etc. - if we invite them to church.

Don't compartmentalize your world. Who you are on Sunday is who you should be Monday to Saturday. You are not forcing or manipulating any one to come to church. You are only throwing them a lifeline and it is up to them to respond. God is on your side and is working with you. So don't worry about what people may think about you.

We are afraid we don't have all the answers and won't be able to answer their questions.

That's alright. None of us have all the answers. That's where people will see that we are just regular people, who also work through challenges and questions and yet we believe.

Sometimes we are too worried about the church service - it's not relevant, they may feel out of place, they won't fit in - and so don't invite people

This is always a risk, but don't worry too much about these details. Remember we are looking for something to change deep inside the person which only be done by the Holy Spirit and not by some good event management tactic. Yes, from time to time we do have services specially geared for the visitor. But God can use anything in a sermon, in the songs we sing, a kind word, a welcome, a prayer - just about anything to touch a person's life. So put your confidence in God when you invite someone to church.

IMPORTANT. We want you to invite unsaved friends, or those who are not going to a church. Do not invite people who are already going to a church!

How do you make the invitation for someone to come to church?:

Be simple. Be truthful. Be inviting without coercing.



'Would you like to come to church this Sunday? I can give you a ride if you need'

'We are having a special Sunday at church. Its called BIG SUNDAY where we will have special music, a sermon on an interesting topic, and we stay back for lunch and games. Would you be interested in coming'

'We have a youth event on Saturday evening with young people from church. Its called PITSTOP. Its real fun. Would you like to come this Saturday?'

Make the invitation to explore Jesus and then pray

It is God who has to touch their hearts through everything that happens - what you have shared, or at church service (the worship, the Word, the prayer, the people they meet, etc). This is not something we control. We can only pray.

Pray according to

John 16:8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"

Let the Holy Spirit touch and convict their hearts and draw them toward Jesus.

After their first visit to church or life group or church event, etc.

1, help them process what they saw, heard and experienced.

2, help them connect with the church community

Surveys have found that people come to church because of a personal invitation. People stay in church because of friendship.

So help people connect with the church community. Make friends. Invite them to a Life Group or other church event where they can meet with others in an informal setting.

So it is important for all of us to be welcoming to new people. ***Smile, say hello, talk to strangers in church. Your welcome could make all the difference.***

3, continue to invite them back, if they are open

4, If they have made a decision for Jesus, then work with them on growing in their faith

Get them a copy of the New Testament. Show the how and where to start reading.



Teach them how to pray.
(More on the discipleship process next week).

Literally, one invitation can change someone's life forever!

***Strategy #1 on how to win souls and make disciples: Invite and Pray
Invite people, give them the opportunity to encounter and explore Jesus for
themselves. Pray for the Lord to reveal Himself to them powerfully.***

Salvation Call : A short gospel message and prayer