



## 06 THE POWER OF INVITATION

The following document is a rough copy of Pastor Drost' sermon notes

from March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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+ A month ago, we had a Newcomers Dinner after church on Sunday. We had about 75 guests. We asked the question: **How did you hear about Smythe Street Church?**

- Few heard about us through the internet, Facebook or our web page.
- Nobody mentioned they heard about us through advertisements.
- Almost all said that they heard about us through **a friend**, someone they knew or a family member.

People pay attention to people they know, people that they are in relationship with. People that are connected to our lives!

**The invitations that matter are those that come from people who are invested in our lives!**

+ We are doing a series called Paths of Life during this Lent season following the steps of Jesus to the Cross and to Easter Sunday.

The message of Jesus was one of invitation: He often said:

**“Come to me.”** John 7:37 (ESV)

He welcomed the broken, the poor, the needy, the foreigner, the children (“**Let the little children come to me**”), the fishermen, the tax collector, **those who were considered the worst of sinners...**

In the **Gospel of Luke chapter 15** it tells us that the worst of sinners were coming to him...

The Pharisees and the religious teachers muttered, “This man **welcomes** sinners and eats with them.” Luke 15:2

Jesus welcomed them, sat with them, talked with them.

And those that came to him invited others...

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “**Come and see.**” John 1:45–46 (ESV)

The centre of the Christian message is one of INVITATION...

**“Come and see!”** **People who have met Jesus inviting other people to come and see!** **THE POWER OF INVITATION!**

- Most of you are here today because someone invited you.
- You are grateful that that person took the time – made the effort to invite you! **RIGHT?**
- Yet you are nervous inviting someone else. That’s awkward!  
You don’t want to come across as pushing your religious views on someone else... we are more than happy to invite someone to try a new app or a new restaurant or a movie... but invite them to church?!
- I struggle with this as well, in fact maybe more than you, think about it... I’m a pastor of a church and people get suspicious!

So I want to pass on some practical ideas that might be of help to you when it comes to inviting someone. I’m using the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well as a base. **John 4**



- Jesus and his disciples are traveling from Judea to Galilee after a long season of ministry.
- As they were crossing through Samaria, Jesus was tired, so he came to a well outside of the city and he stopped there to rest.

The disciples headed into town to get some food.

- A Samaritan woman came to the well to get some water in the heat of the day. Normally, in Bible lands women came to get water from the well earlier in the day while it was still cool.
- Later in the story we discover that she had had a very troubled life, in and out of 5 marriages and living common law with a sixth man. Common-law relationships today are quite acceptable but that wasn't the case then! **So she was probably going to the well at a time in the day when she wouldn't be expecting too many people.**
- Jesus asked her for a drink of water.

Up to this point, in our culture, this would seem quite normal! But not in their culture...

- It was considered socially unacceptable for a Jewish man to talk to a Samaritan woman

The Samaria woman said to Jesus, "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" John 4:9

- This started an amazing conversation between Jesus and this woman that included:
  - 1) **Her personal struggles** (her marriage and relationship struggles)
  - 2) **Her hunger for spiritual things** (Questions)
  - 3) **Her interest in church** (she wanted to know the right place to go to church. Was it the Samaritan's place of worship or the one in Jerusalem?)

### Three cues you can use to identify a prospect for an invitation

① But, before we go any further, I need to point out, that **if you're going to extend an invitation to someone you must be prepared to cross a barrier** (Cultural/social, racial, fear). IT'S A RISK!

② **Next, remember our opening thoughts...**

**The invitations that matter are those that come from people who are invested in our lives!**

**Jesus was invested in her. He opened up his heart to her!**

**He genuinely cared about her!** (People don't respond to cold, heartless, superficial conversations.)

Do we really care about them? Or are they just a church project?

**A "Jesus-like invitation" is a willingness to invest ourselves in someone**

(Our heart, our love, our care, our time, our sacrifice)

Last week Pastor Chad talked about how **Jesus did not have to die on the cross, He chose to die – that's an invitation that's an inconvenience!**

- Keilah Dimayacyac drives around town filling the GMC Yukon with people for Young Adults and drives them home again to make sure they get to fellowship.



- There's a parent of a middle schooler that offers their daughter's friends a ride to the church each Thursday so they can come.
- It's not just about telling people about Alpha; it's bringing them to Alpha (Investment of your time!)

### Let's look at these cues that identify a prospect for an invitation!

#### 1) A personal struggle

Things are not going well. Struggling through a divorce, struggling with their kids, lonely, health issues, problems at work, etc.

- People are often open to an invitation when they are facing a crisis. Very often these situations soften people's hearts towards spiritual conversations! **That is the case of many here!**
- A significant shift in their life. Just moved to a new location, lost your support structure, just had their first child, etc.
- Maybe someone is moving to Fredericton and are looking for someplace to belong.

#### 2) A hunger for spiritual things

- Maybe they want to ask questions but they don't want to go to a more traditional style church setting. They are not looking for a sermon, a top-down exegeses on religion. They want to discover, ask questions, experience their own journey to Christ.
- **Alpha video:** [Alpha2019.mp4](#)
- Notice: Ellen & Melissa had had conversations about spiritual things.
  - Melisa took a risk!
  - She said: "It's not about us, it's about them" (Heart investment)
  - A couple of Sundays I came early and saw a beautiful sight:  
All the cars in the parking lot were parked far on the other side giving room for others to park closer.
- Two friends invited **John Belong** to attend an Alpha. At the time John was searching and a bit uncertain of where his life was going spiritually. Alpha sent him on a journey and walk with God that has continued these 15 years later. He is now one of the new Trustees at our church and very involved in Alpha.
- **Mitch Greencorn** came as a result of a personal invitation and now he's working upstairs with the kids. His words: "To be honest my life has changed so much and I feel Alpha was a big and important first step. I came out of Alpha with a passion to be closer to God and I feel I have grown closer, but I am still a work in progress".

#### 3) An interest in church

At our Newcomers dinner we also asked the question: Why did you first come?

80% said they were looking for a church

**Example:** Some time ago Susan Johnson was scrolling through the messages on Fredericton Daily News' Facebook page and a saw a message Joseph Narouz had posted in the group saying he and his



family were moving to Fredericton from Egypt and were looking for recommendations on places to live, work, school for children etc.

Susan sent Joseph a message, kind of saying “welcome to Fredericton and that it was a great place to raise a family”. Over the next couple of days, she got to know Joseph and Amira and they sent her pictures of themselves and their two wonderful daughters Angela and Amanda. They spoke about careers, places to live and when she asked about their religion he told her that they were Christians. These are Susan’s words: “I was so excited to hear that and told him of the wonderful experience I had when I first came to Smythe and how much it felt like home to me. I told him I thought it would be a great fit for his family and that we had a wonderful and vibrant kids ministry that Amanda and Angela would love”. They arrived in Fredericton just before the Victoria Day weekend last year and they visited Smythe that first Sunday. Joseph and Amira and their two wonderful children have been part of our church ever since and Amira ended up working upstairs with Susan Johnson with the kids.

### **The power of INVITATION! Crossing that barrier and taking a RISK!**

- ✚ The Samaritan woman ran to her town and told everyone about Jesus... **“COME AND SEE”**  
**The invited became the one inviting!**

- ✚ Last week Pastor Chad mentioned that wonderful verse John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (ESV)

My favourite word in this verse is a very little word: “so”

- Adding the word “so” changes everything...  
“That hamburger is good” versus “That hamburger is so good”  
“I am happy you are here” versus “I am so happy you are here”  
“Welcome” versus “You are so welcome!”
- “So” takes things from **ordinary to extraordinary**; from **average to awesome!**
- God’s **INVITATION** is **so** BIG! His **LOVE** is **so** HUGE!
- There’s this word “greet” in the Bible that appears 60 times in the New Testament. It is used twenty-two times in chapter 16 of Romans when Paul is saying goodbye in his letter to the church in Rome...
  - In Greek this word literally means to hold your hands apart
  - Example of a typical Canadian greeting...  
Example of a New Testament greeting...

That is a **so** welcome! **“For God so loved the world”**

