
Creating the Habit of Inviting in Your Church

I had a conversation recently with someone that had been attending our church for about a month. I asked them, as I often do others, how they began attending our church. Their response had a profound impact on me. They told me that a friend of theirs who had been attending for some time had consistently invited them, but this person said they found excuse after excuse not to come.

After a particularly hard season in their life, they finally decided it was time to come to check out this church their friend had told that changed their life. She wanted to see if it could have that same impact on her.

One month later, she told me that it was all true. She just “came to see” and has not left. In fact, she told me that the church was helping her heal a great wound in life. I love those stories.

The key to this story was how her friend consistently invited her to come to church with her. In God’s providence, He used her friend and the simple, but powerful habit of inviting.

One of the most powerful things that happens in the life of a believer or church-goer is when they invite someone to church, that person actually comes, and they have their life changed.

You know personal invitations are powerful. And chances are, you've preached or passionately pleaded with your people to invite others to church. So why don't you hear these types of stories more often?

The Power of Culture

Every church and every organization has a culture that defines its behaviors. We wrap them up in nice paper and call them systems.

In [Andy Stanley's Leadership Podcast on Keystone Habits](#), he says that these habits or systems are not always created on purpose, but rather evolve over time. I would contend to say that behaviors and habits that are not formed intentionally in an organization can often become a bad habit.

The truth is that we act like our culture. Culture determines behavior. This is why the culture of your church is so vital. If you want a culture where new guests consistently show up at your church, then you need to invest in the habit of inviting.

One of the questions that Andy said they wrestled with at North Point was "What habits do we need to turn up or what habits do we need to implement to impact the culture?" They asked this question because Charles Duhigg says in his book [The Power of Habit](#), you have to introduce a new keystone habit to change a culture.

He defines a keystone habit as something that triggers a series of related behaviors or habits. These keystone habits could potentially change a behavior or reaffirm a current behavior.

Andy said they wanted to find a habit that could galvanize their values and what they did as a church that tied back to their mission and vision as a church.

For North Point, their mission is to create churches that unchurched people love to attend. So their keystone habit would be to create a habit of inviting of unchurched people.

Building the Habit of Inviting in Your Church

Regardless of your mission as a church, unless you don't like people, inviting should be something that the people who attend your church are doing regularly. There is nothing more powerful than when a person invites a friend to attend your church. When people invite others to your church, good things happen.

Word of mouth and personal inviting are way more powerful than the best crafted Facebook ad or mailer campaign. If you want to create a culture of inviting in your church, here are three things you can do.

1. Make It Easy

Is it easy for an attendee of your church to invite their unchurched friends? If you don't know, ask them.

The best way to make it easy for people who attend your church to invite their unchurched friends to church is to provide tools for inviting.

Here are few examples of great tools:

- Make business card-sized invite cards advertising your church or current series. Be sure to put your website, times, and directions of the card.
- Have a great website. Most people before visiting your church will check out your website first. Have an easy-to-navigate website with relevant information on it and make sure it looks good on mobile devices. Elevation Church in Charlotte does a great job providing information to potential attendees.
- Provide a few strategic times of the year when inviting is super simple. Do a few series a year where you push your people to invite their friends. This makes it easy to invite them to something specific.

2. Teach People How

Teaching your attenders how to invite is often an overlooked piece of the puzzle. We church leaders assume that people know how to invite their friends to something. That may be true to an extent, but do they know how to effectively invite them?

Teaching them how to use the tools you give them and how they can effectively invite their coworkers, family and friends will pay huge dividends in the long run.

A few ways to teach the art of the invite is:

- Do a message or even sermon series on why it's important to engage with unchurched people
- Set up a class or vision night where all you focus on is the power and how-to of the invite. Newspring church has done a great job with this.
- Write blog or Facebook posts on "5 Ways To Invite Someone To Church Sunday". Make it practical and easy.

The other way to teach this is teach cues. If you want to create a habit of inviting in your church, Andy Stanley gives us three things we can implement in our own churches.

Andy says look for these three cues when talking with others. And when you hear one of these three cues, let that drive the habit of inviting them to church.

Three Not Cues

1. Things are NOT going well...
2. I was NOT prepared for...
3. I am NOT from here....

When one of these three cues is mentioned, it should trigger the person to invite them to church. Take time teaching these to your people for a super effective way to create a habit of inviting.

3. Celebrate It

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a million times; what gets celebrated, gets repeated. Mine your attenders for stories like the one I shared above about how they invited someone. Ask people when they attend, how they heard about your church. When a great story comes along, share it with your church. When someone invites someone and they show up, celebrate that both corporately and personally.

If you take the time to create a habit of inviting in your church, not only will your church grow numerically, but your church will grow in its faith as well as maturity.