

# CCD Visitor and New Friends Care HG and Staff Training

13 January 2025

Bible Ministry: God and the stranger - Exodus 23:9—Leviticus 19:33

**Hospitality** in NT—*philozenia* a love for strangers and foreigners

Romans 12:13; 16:23; 1 Timothy 5:10; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9.

Aquila and Pricilla a fine example. Acts 18:1-4 etc a guest house, a teaching centre, a house church.

## Introduction

CCD is blessed with a significant number of new people attending each week. God is trusting them to us. All of us must commit to care.

### Challenge:

- When did you last engage a Visitor in conversation?
- When did you last follow through meaningfully with a New Friend? Did you speak to them again?

### Our four-fold dangers:

1. VF = Visitor Fatigue. So many that we can't cope so we don't bother.
2. LCC = Large Church Complacency. Our congregation is full and growing so a few extra are not necessary. This means we are responding to numbers and not people. People matter most.
3. PR = Personal Reticence. We are not comfortable talking to strangers and even less comfortable offering hospitality.
4. LITO = Leave It To Others. The ministry team and those more capable.

### Our four-fold privileges

1. We have a wonderful God and Saviour to share.
2. That message is clearly presented from preaching to personal studies.
3. We have a total age range and programmes for all.
4. We have great facilities available in The Way, Lounge etc.

### Engaging with the Visitor after a first visit they are **New Friends**

Our purpose is to welcome and discover: (*not an inquisition*)

- Who may be looking for a Christian fellowship to join
- Who is seeking God
- Who is simply lonely and wanting friendship
- Who is 'passing through' and unlikely to come again
- Etc.

Those distinctions are not always clear on a first visit.

So, how can we respond? ALL of us take the welcome of Visitors and care of New Friends seriously and determine to help at whatever level we are able.

Illustration: large church/small church failures!

## **Priority conversations:**

It is good to catch up after the services. But there may be other opportunities to talk to those friends. Keep an out for people on their own, and priorities them.

## **How to approach a Visitor**

Introduce self and engage as long and as far as they want to. Let them speak about themselves.

### Getting to know you

**Hi, I'm X, I don't think we've met.**

Do you live locally?

Tell me your story, what brought you here?

How did you know about us?

What made you join us this morning?

Do you normally go to a church anywhere?

Do you have any friends in the church here?

### If they're keen to know more:

If you'd like us to keep in touch encourage to fill their details online.

Explain the various activities for their age group.

Gateway, Christianity Explored. etc

Invite to Sunday lunch?

Introduce them to others of their age group.

Etc

Haven't got time to talk? "Pass them on"

## **What is 'Hospitality'?**

Look out for them in following Sundays.

Take your conversations a bit further: background, family, interests

Invite them to The Way for coffee in the week.

Sunday lunch in the Way

Invite to join you at a church activity

Coffee and cake in an evening

A meal at home

Etc

## **A few pointers**

Every member is on the 'Welcome Team'. Try: Once a month deliberately look for Visitor

Hub members watch for your age group.

We need to believe: 'I/we can do it'.

Key areas for new friends: Coffee table (like bees round a honeypot) and the noticeboard!

If you see a Visitor sitting or standing alone, engage them.

Don't worry about the *faux pas* response: 'I've been coming five years' or 'I'm a member'! If that's the case, then why not work on getting to know more of the church members.

Remember: We have back-up for all New Friends' needs. We have something for everyone

e.g: The Way. Sunday lunch. Christianity Explored and 321 etc. Weekday programmes for various interests. Youth and Hub. Strong preaching ministry. Gateway. Warm and friendly care.

---

## **What to do with New friends?**

The Welcome Page helps us to support new friends.

After chatting with a new friend, let Steve or one of the other pastors know about it. It helps us to be aware and to follow up with them.

If we don't communicate well people can fall through the cracks.

**If we are willing to take on the challenge, CCD can be a place where new friends can feel welcome and at home quickly becoming part of the community but also able to hear of Jesus and finding their home in him as their saviour and king.**