

## CHAPTER 1

### RESULTS OF SURVEY OF ALL CHURCHES/PASTORS IN THE E.C. DENOMINATION 20 RESPONSES RECEIVED

1. How do you identify first time visitors?
  - A. Congregation is small so there is no difficulty spotting visitors.
  - B. Assigned greeters with gift of hospitality.
  - C. Attendance pads.
  - D. Guest register.
  - E. Intentional approach through care ministry. In addition to staffed information desk, we have a group who do nothing but warmly and enthusiastically welcome anyone who comes into our lobby area, especially looking for first time attenders.
  
2. What do you do to make them feel welcome?
  - A. Our members go out of their way to greet them and make them feel welcome.
  - B. Person passing out bulletins greets and invites them to sign guest register.
  - C. Printed welcome in bulletin.
  - D. Greeter team guides them from front door to snack and fellowship area, introduces to pastor and others as they travel along. Ushers to seats that suit their desires.
  - E. Often invited to lunch with someone that day.
  - F. Invite to the fellowship time after service.
  - G. Someone at all doors to greet young and old alike.
  - H. Be sure they know what S.S. classes are available and direct them.
  - I. Greeting time for all members and guests at beginning of service.
  - J. Wife is gifted in Holy Spirit for including and acknowledging visitors and bringing them into the presence of God. Goes to them, introduces herself, and places them with a family, couple, or single person who has been in the fellowship longer.
  - K. Pastor or worship leader gives a verbal welcome from chancel and gives information a visitor would want to know, e.g., where do the children go for kids' church -OR- that it's ok for the children to remain with the parents.
  - L. Bulletins are designed with visitors in mind.

- M. We train our care ministry personnel so they are sensitive to the feelings and experiences of someone who is new to our church setup.
  - N. S.S. Superintendent always available between services to assist anyone looking for an age-appropriate class.
  - O. Children's Pastor has set up a Children's Welcome Center. Registers new attendees for S.S. and gives information on other children's ministries.
3. Do you give anything to visitors?
- A. A welcome packet that includes a generic welcome to the Family of God, a bulletin, and a brochure about the church - all professionally designed and very attractive. Also a CEV Bible.
  - B. Only if they ask questions about the church, denomination, etc. Then a brochure or an E.C. leaflet explaining our history or creed.
  - C. Our statement of belief, vision statement, outline of congregational ministries, etc.
  - D. A welcome visitor's form to sign.
  - E. A gift pack that includes a Gospel from The Message Bible and other items such as pen, pencil, notepads, etc.
  - F. Home-baked items (bread) given as visitor leaves services or delivered by a lay person, preferably same day of visit.
  - G. After 2<sup>nd</sup> visit, homemade bread, pie, or cookies are taken to home with note of thanks for coming.
  - H. We don't give them a pin or flower that will single them out.
  - I. There are enough people who regularly warmly greet visitors before and after the service before they even reach the pastor at the door.
  - J. Red rose lapel sticker.
  - K. CEV Bible.
4. When is follow-up made? How? By whom?
- A. During the week by a letter and phone call from the pastor.
  - B. By letter, if a complete address is given. Otherwise, wait and see if they return. After 2<sup>nd</sup> visit, pastor or a board member schedules a visit.
  - C. Welcome letter from pastor 1<sup>st</sup> week. Phone call after 2<sup>nd</sup> visit. At that time an appointment is made for a pastoral visit - often arranged to overlap with a meal at the pastor's home or in a restaurant. If a good "connect" is made with one of the greeters, they will also call the

- visitor (decision made by greeter team.)
- D. Depends on age. Young people not followed up after 1<sup>st</sup> week since many do not want that.
  - E. In addition to pastor's call, he asks others in same age group to follow up.
  - F. Personalized visitor letter on Monday morning from the pastor with some note that reflects a specific point in a conversation I had with them. Letter says I would be glad to visit with them if they would like, but I will not pop in uninvited.
  - G. Hand-written note.
  - H. If visitor is a woman, the director of women's ministries will contact.
  - I. After 2<sup>nd</sup> visit to church, baked goods and note. After 3<sup>rd</sup> visit pastor visits to talk about mission and program of the church and how they can become involved.
  - J. Within day or two, pastor phones.
  - K. With 2<sup>nd</sup> letter, there is a mail survey so that a pastoral visit can be requested.
  - L. Phone call by church representative. Are asked about visit and offered a visit by a visitation team.
  - M. We have two families who visit within first week. If they have checked on card that they would like pastor to visit, he will also.
5. What has been most effective in your congregation?
- A. Personal welcome by regular members.
  - B. Those who have visited, returned, and stayed, tell us it is the friendly, family atmosphere.
  - C. If we can connect with visitors in any kind of an "out-of-church" building even, we can often establish a long term relationship. People are lonely and looking for fellowship. They just don't know how to find it. We like to help!
  - D. Pastor pursues, then pastor and wife, then evangelism commission all in quiet affirmation of who they are as individuals.
  - E. Making sure we identify visitors and see that they have someone to sit with them when they come in.
  - F. Official greeters and spontaneous greetings from other members.
  - G. Nothing more important than the first impression as people arrive and informal introductions before they leave. If you pay attention to the entrance and exit, you have probably won the battle.
  - H. Intentionally organizing a ministry to reach out to visitors.
  - I. Making those already inside the church aware of the feelings and experiences of those coming for the first time. Most believers assume

everyone feels as comfortable in the church as they do. When searching for God or a new church home, it is a very threatening place to be when no one in the church seems to care.

- J. Many key people in the church taking responsibility to greet new people.
  - K. The friendliness of our congregation right now and, of course, the exceptional pastor!
6. List other comments and suggestions
- A. We have discovered “in your face” pressure can be a big turnoff. The info. card they fill out is carefully studied and obeyed. If they do not ask for more information, we wait to see if they will come back.
  - B. Relationship is what it is all about.
  - C. As pastor, I try to get as much information about a visitor as I can the morning they visit. It may be the only contact I get, and I want them to know they are welcome back anytime.
  - D. We do not overdo the personal greetings. Never give the feeling you are swooping down on them and can’t wait to get your clutches into them.
  - E. Coffee and welcome table with home baked breakfast cake, decaffeinated coffee (being sensitive to pregnant women), and tea. Punch drinks (not too sugary) for children.
  - F. Use term “Christian Education” rather than “Sunday School”, which unchurched people view as a childish term.
  - G. Instruct congregation that we don’t come to worship to visit with our friends in small cliques, but rather we are to move around among visitors and friends alike. Save “fellowship” for small home groups.
  - H. We threw a surprise baby shower for a couple that was still only visiting.
  - I. Do not exhibit signs of judgmentalism as a church. Rather, minister to hurting people.
  - J. Multi-pronged “attack” best. People want to be noticed but not conspicuous.
  - K. People feel complimented when their name is remembered.
  - L. Hand written notes in preference to “form” letters.
  - M. Never ask visit to stand or speak. Put yourself in place of the visitor. Reduce awkward moments. It’s a fine line between a smothering welcome and feeling ignored.
  - N. If a new youth member shows up for a second time, I arrange to take them out to eat, along with some other kids.