

# Don't Invite Anyone to Church

If you're like most long-time church members, you've managed to invite quite a few people to come to church. And if you're like most long-time church members, most of those invites have been politely turned down with one excuse or another.

"Sunday's my only day to sleep in."

"The kid's soccer practice is on Sunday mornings."

"Sunday's my golf day."

"I just don't go to church anymore."

Sadly, the church doesn't have a great reputation in our culture today. If you ask unchurched people why they don't want to go to church, you'll hear words like *boring* and *irrelevant*. With that kind of notoriety, it's no wonder our invitations fall on deaf ears.

On the other hand, if you somehow could remove the twin stigmas of boring and irrelevant, you'd likely have better luck in getting a friend to "come to church" with you. And believe it or not, there's an effective way to turn around the church's reputation.

Most pastors preach sermon series on hot topics these days; three to six messages on important themes. To help grow your church, the next time your pastor announces an upcoming series, take a few minutes to read up about it so you understand what's coming up (if the pastor hasn't provided something in writing about the series, ask her/him to get you some basic details). Then spend a few minutes in prayer and ask the Spirit to suggest people in your sphere of influence that would be moved, touched, or inspired by the topic.

For instance, if the upcoming series is on difficult questions in the Bible, you might remember that a coworker has expressed her skepticism about scripture and might find the topic interesting. If the series is on healing inner hurts, you may know someone who's recently experienced a broken relationship who would find the series comforting.

Once you've made a list of those you believe would find the series helpful or interesting, then use whatever tools the church provides to invite those on your list. If the church provides invitation cards, then get a couple to hand out. If the church has an online graphic for the series, copy it and use it to send an email invite. Or if the church has created a social media event, send an invitation on to those on your list.

Of course, the most effective way to invite a friend to attend an upcoming series is to invite them in person.

"Terry, I know you're still reeling from your mom's passing. Over the next three weeks my pastor is talking about how to build on grief to make a brighter tomorrow. I was hoping you'd join me for breakfast on Sunday and afterwards we could hear what she has to say about life after grief."

“Kelly, you’ve said you think the Bible is full of contradictions. My pastor’s created a message series on five of those contradictions. I thought you might like to join me to hear what he has to say ... and then you and I could get coffee and talk about them. Can I pick you up Sunday at 10:30?”

When you invite your friends to something “at church” they’d be interested in, you automatically get past the boring and irrelevant objections.