

“Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations” by Robert Schnase
readings for the week:

Monday: Matthew 25:31-46

Whatever we do to the least of these, we do to God.

Tuesday: Deuteronomy 10:12-22

We were once the outsider.

Wednesday: Hebrews 13:2

Show hospitality to others. More than just welcoming them; make them comfortable within the church and small group setting.

Thursday: John 1:39, 43-51

Jesus always invited others, “Come and see. Follow Me.”

Extend the same invitation to others. Come - experience God’s love within the community of the church.

Friday: Matthew 20:28; Phil 2:5-12; Rom. 15:7

Being radically hospitable requires an attitude similar to that of Jesus Christ.

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Poplar Grove UMC

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations

Radical Hospitality

Vibrant, healthy, fruitful Congregations recognize that several things are taking place during worship:

- They are benefited and sustained by being in God’s presence
- They play a huge role in helping others experience God’s presence

The Christian life is marked by growing in one’s own faith and it is marked by having an awareness and genuine concern for strangers that have yet to be invited and welcomed into the faith community.

In Deuteronomy 10:19 God reminds the people of Israel to welcome the stranger, the traveler, and the wanderer because that is what they used to be.

Someone invited us, (someone may have made you come – parents)

Someone encouraged us (after we got here)

Someone received us and helped us feel welcome.

Churches characterized by Radical Hospitality are not just friendly and welcoming for the sake of being friendly and welcoming.

- ❖ They have an underlying sense of urgency, a sense of restlessness that people need a place to feel welcomed into the family of God
- ❖ They realize that there are lots of people who do not belong to a faith community.
- ❖ They are aware of the life and death situations that face everyone that is not here yet; those people who are not a part of a faith community

What do Radically Hospitable churches offer?

A place where:

- ✓ People learn that God loves them, that they are of value, and that their life has significance.
- ✓ People learn they are NOT alone.
- ✓ People learn how to offer and accept forgiveness.
- ✓ People learn how to serve and be served.
- ✓ People learn life is about living and giving to something that will last for all of eternity.
- ✓ People learn that our purpose in life is loving God and loving others

Jesus said, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Matthew 25:35, 40

For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy...” Romans 15:8-9

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God one and only Son.

John 3:16-18

Romans and the gospel of John tell us that:

- People who do not believe in Jesus Christ are condemned.
- But God loves people and wants them to be able to find a place that will welcome them and receive them just the way they are so that they are no longer condemned.

One of the core values of a radically hospitable church is that:
Lost people matter to God therefore lost people matter to us!

Churches that strive to be Radically Hospitality will regularly ask:

1. How are we doing at inviting guests and teaching people to invite others?
2. How are we doing at genuinely and authentically welcoming people?
3. How are we doing at helping people find their way into the congregation?
4. How are we doing at inviting people into our group of friends?
5. What can we do better this year in reaching our neighbors?
6. Am I willing to be radically hospitable?

40-60% of the people in our neighborhood have no church relationship.

People are searching for hope, healing, reconciliation, love and purpose in life.

People are searching for a church that is “Radical Hospitality”!