

# THREE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE OUTREACH

In order to become more effective in our congregation's outreach ministries, there are three key concepts to keep in mind.

## 1. **Are our outreach efforts “meaningful”?**

People who are active in the congregation have already determined which congregational activities are “meaningful” to them. They have preferences in terms of their preferred style of worship, which hymns they like to sing, their worship time, and who their friends are within the congregation. Their definition of “meaningful” may be entirely different from those who are newcomers to our congregation.

“Meaningful-ness” does not just happen. You cannot automatically assume that what is “meaningful” to you will be “meaningful” to newcomers. Because each person has different preferences and histories, it may take some time to discover what other people value as “meaningful”. The best way to find out is to ask people about their background - What is their former church experience, if any? What kinds of life experiences and activities do they enjoy? And about what kinds of things are they passionate? Even though activities may be “meaningful” to you, in order to attract new people, we need to consider what kinds of things are “meaningful” to them.

## 2. **Are our outreach efforts “relevant” to people's lives?**

Most people who visit a church are looking for ways to enrich their lives. They have needs that they hope the congregation will help them meet. If they have children, they are looking for age-appropriate social and educational opportunities. Some people are looking for like-minded friends and fellowship opportunities. Other people are looking for a group that gives them a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose — a place where they can share their God-given gifts and be accepted for who they are.

Once again, “relevancy” does not just happen. It takes time to become acquainted with people, to discover what they value most in life and to provide them with a safe environment in which they can share their deepest longings, hopes and dreams.

## 3. **Are our outreach efforts “relational”?**

The Church exists to help people build better relationships in two ways. The Church helps people to build a better relationship with God and to build a better relationship with other people. If our congregation can help people to become better connected to God and to others that will have a positive impact on our outreach efforts. Many people hope that the Church can help them develop meaningful relationships. If our congregation can do that, it will increase its chances of attracting and retaining visitors and members.

## Reflection Questions

- What does our congregation do to help make it more “meaningful” to newcomers and visitors?
- How does our congregation take time to connect with new people in “relevant” ways?
- In what ways does our congregation help people to grow in their relationship with God and with each other? What could make our congregation more “relational”?

## StewardTips: 20 Stewardship Questions

Becoming a good steward doesn't just happen by accident. Like any gift, it develops over time. Here are "20 Stewardship Questions" for you to consider as you reflect on our congregation and its stewardship practices. You do **not** need to return your answers to anyone. They are offered to you as "conversation starters".

1. What does our congregation teach about "good stewardship practices"?
2. Upon what beliefs are our congregational stewardship practices based?
3. What kind of personal finance classes does our congregation offer to help people to become better stewards?
4. What does our congregation believe and teach about tithing and proportionate giving?
5. In what ways does our congregation encourage people to be generous?
6. Does our congregation offer wills and estate planning seminars?
7. Where do congregational members find joy in their giving?
8. What kind of stories does our congregation share when giving makes (or made) a difference in people's lives?
9. What kind of life enrichment classes (e.g. marriage, parenting, etc.) does our congregation offer to help people to become better stewards of their relationships?
10. What does our congregation do to help people prepare for retirement?
11. What opportunities for service does our congregation offer as a means of inviting people to use their God-given gifts for ministry?
12. Does our congregation believe in the "priesthood of all believers"/"the ministry of the baptized"? If so, how is this lived out in people's lives?
13. How do congregational leaders lead by example in terms of a life of Christian discipleship?
14. What does our congregation believe and teach about the importance of saying "Thank You" to people for their service?
15. How would people know and see that our congregation is "blessed to be a blessing" to others?
16. How does our congregation determine which community service projects it will support?
17. In your opinion, for what particular stewardship practices should our congregation be commended?
18. What kind of vision/expectation does our congregation have that encourages generosity?
19. What do you believe are the key values/principles of Christian stewardship?
20. Who taught you about what it means to be a good steward? For whom are you a model of being a good steward?

I am genuinely interested in hearing your thoughts and ideas about stewardship. Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss any of these questions in greater depth. Thank you for your faithful stewardship!

With gratitude to God for you,  
Pastor Bob Dealey  
Coordinator of Stewardship & Outreach