

# TWENTY –FOUR WAYS TO A MORE HOSPITABLE CHURCH

## The Ministry of Hospitality

Openness to outsiders and outcasts is an expression of scriptural hospitality.

*“When did we see you hungry and feed you, naked and clothe you....”*

Luke 7:36-50; Jesus is critical of Simon for not being welcoming; John 13:1ff honoring guests, offering refreshment and accepting refreshment.

**The goal is to change “outsiders” into guests**

## Hospitality Inventory for Your Church

### **A. Church building’s appearance**

- 1. What does your Church building look like to the stranger?**
- 2. How does your Church sign look?**
- 3. Is the sign changed regularly (don’t put the sermon title on it)**
- 4. Is there a flower garden in your front lawn?**
- 5. What does your front door look like?**

*In other words – does your Church look like its cared for?*

### **B. Inside inventory**

- 1. Signage?** Where is Fellowship Hall? Sanctuary? Bathrooms?  
Church office? Educational classrooms and other areas?
- 2. Where’s the nursery? Do you even have one? Is there an attendant?**
- 3. Bulletin board? Better not to have one than to not care for it**
- 4. Is there a person at the front door greeting people?**
- 5. Do you have a literature rack?**
- 6. What information is in it?** Community information is NOT hospitality information! (Community information should be in a different place, perhaps at a central location during coffee hour or somewhere other than the front foyer, narthex, etc.)
- 7. How clean is your entryway?** Is it cluttered? Any pictures?

### **C. Worship**

- 1. Have you trained your ushers to be gracious?** Helpful? Give directions? Provide information?
- 2. Do your ushers know something of the history of your Church?**
- 3. Do you provide a information guide/Deacon at the end of your Service for those interested?** For example:  
*(“At the end of each worship service, a Deacon(ness) of our Church is available, if you would like:  
Someone to pray for you,  
More information about our church,  
To know about what Congregational Christianity is all about*

- 4. Do your bulletins address “the public” i.e.**  
Are they respectful of the stranger or is the church’s “inside language” used?
- 5. Do you limit announcement from the pulpit or re-read anncts in the Bulletin?**
- 6. Have you thought of projecting anncts on a screen during the gathering time before worship.**
- 7. Do you have a way to recognize guests without embarrassing them or forcing them to stand and identify themselves?**
- 8. Do you have classes, groups, studies to which you want to invite people?** Are they publicized?
- 9. Do you have a web site?**
- 10. Do you take the presence of children seriously.** They are not the *future* Church. They ARE the church as much as any adult. Don’t moralize if you have a children’s story time or moment during worship. Answer questions children have. Affirm that they are loved. Moralizing to children is “playing to the adults” in worship.
- 11. Do you have a coffee hour?**  
Assign a deacon to identify and introduce people who attend the coffee hour so that they are not standing alone in your fellowship room, etc.

#### **D. Membership**

- 1. What process do you have for membership development?**
- 2. Has your Diaconate board read Roy Oswald’s “The Inviting Church”**

There is a difference between encouragement and overzealousness. Give guests encouragement, kindness, but not an application or invitation to join your congregation. They are GUESTS, not prospects. Let them ask for membership materials when they are ready.

If you want to be a hospitable Church then start on several fronts to change the way you activate your kindness, your care for the outsider, the stranger..

Publicize good news. Do not assume that the changes you are making are known by your membership. Tell them what you are doing and tell them why, and tell them who’s doing it. Invite them into the process!