

THE WELCOMING PASTOR
1 TIMOTHY 3:1-2

Have you ever had someone say to you after some time after getting to know you say something like: When I first met you I thought you were... Mean/Stuck up/full of yourself/weird/intimidating... And it was totally wrong? Have you ever thought- Why did they think that?

The answer: first impressions are powerful. This is a biblical principle; Paul says that those who want to be pastors must love hospitality- Which speaks of being able to welcome new people and make them feel at ease. This is a skill to be developed NOW.

I. WELCOMING STRANGERS:

A. The difference between success and failure is sometimes a matter of people skills.

1. This is the skill or ability in: relating to people

a. 1 Tim 3 is about pastoral qualifications; *7 have to do with relationships/skill*

2. Our text- tells us about one aspect; Hospitable ...KJV says- *Given to Hospitality*

a. Or being one who *loves new people*; People you don't know yet.

3. Our calling is to *outsider*- The people we don't know yet, the people that need Jesus.

a. This is the definition of pioneering; Trying to attract people you **DONT KNOW** and win them to Jesus.

B. We need to face some truths about the obstacles that can make this mission difficult...

1. **Most pioneer churches have no outward reason why people should be attracted**

a. They're meeting in a home/hotel/hall (Mike in Gates- Panera); Or if they have a storefront building- only a few people are there- *illust: Tim in San Marcos- pioneer praise/taking offering/leading while passing the plate/preaching to 3 people (including his wife) after a religious guy asked "Where are all the people"*

b. So there's no outward reason why people would be attracted to coming-

2. The 2nd obstacle; **Many people are not comfortable coming into a new environment-**

a. Some don't like the terrible feeling of not knowing what's going to happen- *We know what's happening*

b. So, this stirs up fear; Will they point me out/will they put attention on me?!

i. Story from a NC that visited an all black gospel church; When he walked in the music stopped, and everyone looked at him, and the pastor put attention on him! *Theres people that do not want that!*

C. So Paul points out in our text- That pastors/disciples need to be mindful of new people. **HOSPITABLE**

1. **IOW:** We must have the ability to welcome strangers/ help them to feel comfortable

2. For example: You may have a great prayer life/good character/hard laborer; but you can negate all that good by lacking a welcoming/hospitable quality.

b. I have seen men who say they want to pastor but; never smile/make people feel nervous/can't make conversation

i. *And if I didn't want to be around them! But maybe had too! I can only imagine poor visitors that get sucked into their vortex- They don't have to be around them- and they won't!*

D. A fact of pastoring; Often people will be drawn to us, before they are drawn to our Jesus.

1. **PG:** *People will fall in love with you before they fall in love with your Jesus.*

2. So we must ensure we attract and keep people instead of driving them away.

II FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

A. Powerful fact of life; The law of first impressions

1. What people's 1st encounter either makes them receptive or rejecting of all that follows.

a. Like table service from a waiter at a restaurant; *They can determine that entire meal & experience*

i. Took daughter to dinner, new server was taking a little longer to get to us, when he finally did; he led with his name, an apology, and then asked, *how may I serve you tonight...* I thought- That was a good fix to a slow start.

2. So; We want/hope/pray/labor for people to come & visit the church; so our first impression matters!

a. Recent article said: *You may only have one opportunity to show a client or customer what you're about.*

i. See in a short time; a person forms an opinion about you based on your appearance, your body language, your demeanor, your mannerisms, your talk.

B. So; Let's examine some basic helps for first impressions

1. **Smile:** A smile is the most basic form of showing pleasure

a. There is something in us that responds to another person's smile (Smiles are contagious)

i. The message of a smile is that *we take pleasure in visitors being here with us.*

2. **Welcoming:** Many businesses have some form of customer greeting- *Chick-fil-a How may I serve you*

a. People need to be told/feel that they are welcome; *This will help put them at ease-*

b. Part of welcoming involves voice tone, body language, openness. (Open your heart to them)

3. **Eye Contact:** When speaking to someone... look at them-

a. Your eyes reveal interest & sincerity & tracking.

b. A lack of eye contact can be a sign of shiftiness/untrustworthiness

i. You can seem dishonest when you're actually **NOT**-

c. Important that you look at people when you speak to them.

4. **Posture:** Your posture reveals your attitude

a. When a person isn't confident what do they do? ...They slouch/duck their head/don't look directly at people-

b. When you talk to people; Stand straight/face the person/look at them!

i. In this: Be conscious of your hygiene... hair, breath, clothes... look presentable. Be someone people want to follow

5. **Conversation:** Know your audience. You have to adapt your conversation according to your audience.

a. Then; Think about what you talk about:

i. Remember: People like to talk about themselves- Learn conversation starters.

ii. Listen for verbal clues; where the conversation should go... Look for social cues; How much do they want to talk?

b. People like to feel important; Take time with them, answer their questions or meet their needs-

c. People like to feel at ease: Have a sense of humor & use it!

III OBTAINING SKILL:

A. For those who don't currently possess this ability- You can get it! This is a skill

1. Begins with knowledge; There's some things you need to know/things to find out-

a. **1 Peter 3:7** *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge,*

i. Knowledge: To know/ A science; The study of people-

b. So; Watch those who do have good skills

c. Listen to what they say/how they say thing

d. Search for information; Read books/articles/videos

2. This also requires practice; Find who is new- introduce yourself- spark conversation-

a. Last week we had visitors; What were their names? How did they decide to come to church? Did you get contact info? Have you tried to contact them?

3. Lastly there is GRACE involved; God will help you; If you want to learn God will help you if you want to improve so that souls will be saved-

a. **Luke 2:52** *And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.*

Resources:

How to win friends and influence people (in the digital age): Dale Carnegie

How to talk to anyone: Leil Lowndes

Just Listen: Mark Goulston

Verbal Judo: George Thompson & Jerry Jenkins