

KEEPING PEOPLE

12:9-21

My dad - Dave Ciaccio - been coming to this church and has been saved 50 years, said that one of the reasons he kept coming back to church was because he knew there were 2 men in the church Noel Tossing and rob Kanard- that remembered his name and cared about him.

For a church and disciples to be effective in the great commission and soul winning we must know how to keep people.

Serious Men

Romans

Romans 12:9-21

I. HUMAN NATURE

- A. The need of humanity: what people are looking for

Romans 12:13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

1. People are looking for relationships
 - a) *Denver: we had a number of ex drug dealers we invited into our home on many occasions- one year we had all of them over for Thanksgiving- a few of them came to me after and said "We've never actually had a Thanksgiving meal before."*
2. People are looking for friendships
 - a) Think about the terrible relationships you had before you Got saved- when a visitor comes into our church what they desperately need is someone to reach out to them- make a connection
3. Looking for something and someone to identify with

1964- P. Mitchell and Nelda were pastoring in Canada- he noticed that after every service when there was a visitor who came- people in the church would either invite them to lunch at their home or after an evening service they would be invited over for desert- nothing lavish or extraordinary- but when this happened relationships were built and visitor would come back to service.

- B. The Generation of seekers- people searching for something genuine

1. We see peoples hunger for social connection: Facebook, instagram, twitter, snapchat
 - a) Social media shows us that people are desperate to connect / hungry for relationship and connection
2. In the church: there must be a genuine concern for visitors
 - a) A desire to connect with people- who may not be like us

II. PEOPLE SKILLS

- A. Responding to peoples needs in church

1. Our obligation to the visitors

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

- a) Ask visitors "How can we help you." "Would you like to sit with me?" / we should **NEVER** have a service where a visitor has to sit by themselves
- b) Create an atmosphere that is warm and welcoming
2. Demonstrate empathy towards people
 - a) Empathy means the ability to understand or share the feelings of another person
3. Showing Hospitality- Not talking about a welfare program
 - a) Many churches have programs/ hotel vouchers/soup kitchens- Thats not hospitality
 - b) Problem with the mega church model: People can come to church and never build relationships
 - c) the average attender of a mega church is 18 months- why? freebies dry up, they get board, leave for something more exciting / relationships were never built

Romans 12:13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

1 Tim 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;

4. Meeting **Legitimate** needs in the congregation

P. Mitchell- new convert wanted to give all his stuff away- homeless man asked for money said he was hungry- P. Mitchell then being inquisitive walked into a liquor store- then he walked out with a bottle of wine.

- a) Given to Hospitality: Actually means - **entertains strangers / how you treat someone who can do nothing for you**
- B. The message of the Gospel: Keep the main things the main thing
 - 1. The message of the Gospel is a message of hope for sinners

Luke 10:33-37 33 *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" 37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

- 2. IT is an invitation to a family/ body of believers/ like minded people
 - a) *Church = body & fender shop. God's Spirit drags in wrecked people to get straightened. = Spiritual urgent care (Hope = church)*
 - b) *"Truth is more caught than taught" = demonstrate by example. "Throw it where they can catch it."*

2 Timothy 2:2 *The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

- 3. The Early Church gave us an example of this

Romans 12:11 *not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;*

- a) Word diligence: Earnest care for others - Means we are doing this for God-
- b) When you serve others your are actually serving God - God takes notice

III. KEEPING PEOPLE

A. Focus on Hospitality

- 1. We must see outside our own insecurities and problems
 - a) Living a life for Christ means our eyes should come off ourselves and onto other people
- 2. Be ready to befriend any new people that come in

Acts 9:26 *When Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, & did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But **Barnabas** took him & **brought him to the apostles**. & He declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, & that He had spoken to him, & how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.*

- a) This may involve inviting someone to your home- be willing go out of your way for them

Matt 25:35 *'I was hungry & you gave Me food; I was thirsty & you gave Me drink; I was a stranger & you took Me in; 36 I was naked & you clothed Me; I was sick & you visited Me; I was in prison & you came to Me.' They said, "When did we do that?" 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

- 3. The role of the church is provide an atmosphere where people can hear from God and be changed
 - a) This means we must see beyond the outreach/ beyond a person coming in and simply praying

Mitchells saved in 1954: 10-mo. old daughter died, no \$, brother wrote blank check; funeral @ church = saved, but carnal Bro would make lunch each Sunday = helped the Mitchell's keep going, eventually got filled, but hospitality = key

Acts 2:41-42 *Those who gladly received his word were baptized; & that day about 3000 souls were added to them. & They **continued steadfastly** in the apostles' doctrine & fellowship, in the **breaking of bread**, & in prayers.*

- b) The early church 1/2 of the ministry was devoted to - Building common relationship

B. Key to Growth

- 1. Ask God to give us a love for people
 - a) Caring for others **does not always come natural**- A prayer God would love to answer is that God would put in us a heart for people- love for the foreigner
- 2. Hospitality also changes us
 - a) Its easy to think that when we are hospitable then that's great other people are blessed and grow- but in our text- Paul reminds the church the Hospitality gets Gods attention- and we are also blessed by it

Romans 12:1-2 1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

- 3. Hospitality can keep people coming again and again
 - a) If we are hospitable to visitors= Reason many people go to church, & will keep going because they care about me