

The Power of a Simple Invitation

Next Sunday morning (12/8) is going to be our first formal *Invite a Friend to Church Day*. Of course, you are welcome to invite your friends to worship any time, but this Sunday we are going to make a conscious effort as a group to give invitations to our friends and family. The challenge is for everyone to invite just one person. That is very do-able. Success is not judged by whether or not someone comes, but by whether or not you extend the invitation.

Maybe you are wondering what the point of it all is. Have you ever considered how powerful a simple invitation might be? Consider what the Samaritan woman accomplished in John 4 simply by extending an invitation to meet Jesus. After Jesus revealed himself to her John says, ²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹ 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?' ³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him" (4:28-30). Later, we are told, ³⁹ Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me all that I ever did.' ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world'" (4:39-42). All this happened because a lowly woman extended an invitation to her friends to come and meet Jesus.

Have you ever thought about how Peter became a disciple of Jesus? Most of the times when we talk about Peter's call we think about Lk. 5:1-11 when Peter was in a boat that Jesus used to teach the crowds. John, however, records a previous introduction. Andrew was Peter's brother and he was a follower of John the Baptist. Andrew heard John the Baptist talking about Jesus, and from there he became Jesus' disciples (Jn. 1:35-37). Notice how Peter met Jesus, ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which means Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas' (which means Peter)" (1:40-42). Peter is a major part of Christianity, and it all started with a simple invitation to come and meet Jesus.

Let's look at one more example. Acts 10 records that God simultaneously called Peter to go visit Cornelius' home, and Cornelius to invite Peter over to hear what he had to say. Acts 10:24b says, "Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends." Later, when Peter arrived, "...he went in and found many persons gathered" (10:27b). We sometimes talk about Cornelius as the first Gentile convert; but it might be just as fitting to talk about him as the first Gentile teacher because he was responsible for "many" people getting to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and he did it by inviting them to hear the word of God.

Maybe you will hand out your invitations and people will ignore you. Maybe they will roll their eyes and says, "Ok, whatever." They might smile and say thank you and once you leave throw your invitation in the trash. But someone might come; and that someone might turn out to be like one of the Samaritans who believed because of the woman, or like Peter who believed because of Andrew's invitation, or like one of the people who heard Peter teach the Gentiles because Cornelius invited them to hear.

Let's all make an effort to invite at least one person to come and worship God with us next Sunday morning.

Ryan Boyer, Preacher

Ellisville Church of Christ

www.SimpleChristians.com

62 Henry Ave. | Ellisville, MO 63021

Office: (636) 207-0789

Email: EllisvilleCofC@att.net