

Contact, Conversion, and Nurture

Pre-evangelism is an often overlooked step in the disciple-making process. In fulfilling Christ's commission to go and make disciples, contact needs to be made with those who will someday become followers of Christ. How does one make connections that will bear the fruit of actual conversion? How is the "soil" prepared so the seed can sprout and mature substantially? Hospitality and relationships play a vital role in the first steps to making disciples, as well as the ongoing nurturing of the followers of Christ. This session will focus on the importance of those elements.

Tom Streeter is the teaching elder of the church he began in Zionsville, Indiana, in 1981. Having planted churches in Illinois and Indiana, his 45 years of pastoral ministry have been characterised by a devotion to developing disciples within the context of the church. Whether training believers in participatory worship, meaningful relationships, cultural engagement, or a vigorous life of the mind, he has a passion for right thinking and authentic living. His lifelong study in theology, the church, and history has included leading several Reformation tours in Europe along with his wife, Judy.

Judy Streeter and her husband Tom have worked to develop churches that emphasise worship, community, small groups, sound teaching, discipleship, and meaningful engagement with culture. Believing that evangelism and the strength of the church are only as effective as the disciple-making process, she has developed materials to facilitate women in properly nurturing growth in others. Her book, *Disciplemaking: Doing What Christ Commanded*, summarises her understanding and passion in this area. Music occupies a high place in Judy's life in the church and as a teacher and performer. Always ready to travel, she and Tom have led Reformation tours in Europe.

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Scriptures teach the worth of every human being. As Christians, we embrace the value of each person.

- B. Our basis for this is creation, that all are created in the image of God.

- C. Jesus explained the importance of love being expressed at several levels.
 - 1. First commandment: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.*"
 - 2. Second commandment: "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*"
Inclusive of all people, believers and unbelievers.
 - 3. The Good Samaritan: because man is man, he is to be loved at all cost.

D. Apostle Paul: “*And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love toward one another, and toward all men...*”

E. Loving God and loving all men---believers and unbelievers---should be our mindset.

II. CONTACT --- PRE-EVANGELISM

A. Pre-evangelism is commanded by God when he says we are to love our neighbor.

B. Pre-evangelism frees us to be with unbelievers.

C. Pre-evangelism makes evangelism easier.

D. Pre-evangelism is not evangelism.

E. Pre-evangelism requires a mindset of hospitality.

III. HOSPITALITY

A. Hospitality is fundamental to Christian identity.

1. Definition: “*lover of strangers*” --- *given to the generous and cordial reception of guests --- offering a pleasant and sustaining environment*

2. God is portrayed in Scripture as a generous host.

B. Scriptural Journey of Hospitality

1. Old Testament: Elijah & Elisha
2. New Testament: Luke 14:12-14: the Good Samaritan
3. Matt. 25:31-46: “...*I was a stranger, and you invited me in...*”
4. Rom. 12:13: Paul encourages believers to pursue and practice hospitality
5. Heb. 13:2: “*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers...*”
6. I Tim. 3 & Titus 1: a requirement of leaders/elders is that they be hospitable men
7. Eph. 2:19: God took us in permanently and we are no longer strangers and aliens
8. I Pet. 4:7-10: “...*be hospitable without complaint...*”

C. Who do we welcome? Who do we open our arms to?

1. Those with whom we live
2. Our children’s friends
3. Colleagues from work
4. Travelers
5. College students
6. Neighbors
7. Singles
8. Neglected children
9. Exercise partners --- walking, biking, etc.
10. Hosting teas & coffees for neighborhood
11. Discipleship groups/small groups
12. Foreign students who have no place to go on Christmas, Easter, etc.
13. Bring hospitality to those who cannot come to us: long-term hospital patients, those in prison, the handicapped, disabled in special care centers

IV. CONVERSION

A. Examples of evangelism and conversion

1. Relationships formed because of neighborhood, exercise, small groups, camp, etc.
2. Input from several believers, resulting in salvation

V. NURTURE

A. Take responsibility for growth in new Christians

B. Intentional relationships

1. Available
2. Teachable
3. Eager

C. Equipping those who will become equippers

1. Assurance of salvation

2. Comprehension of the Christian faith
 3. Stewardship of time, money, talents, relationships
 4. Love of the church
 5. Obedience
 6. Home Life
- D. Believers need to disciple others for their own health
- E. Church leaders need to be examples in discipling others
- F. Hospitality facilitates nurture