



CREATING A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE IN THE CHURCH

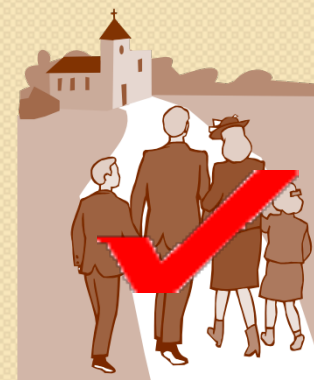
INTRODUCTION

1. Most basic point in this lesson is “greet each other”. Say “Hi”. (Rom. 16:15,16)
2. What does it take to be a member here? To be accepted???
3. What does it take to feel welcome here - like you belong and are wanted?



INTRODUCTION

- 4. What is “the church”? – called out (Eph. 1:22,23)
- 5. Too often “church” is reduced to a destination – “I’m going to church”. How do you do that?
Someone stand up and church for us. Church is who we are, not where we go!



I. CALL OUT OF:

- A. The World (1 Cor. 6:9-10 – then verse 11). Would you feel comfortable going “to church” with these folks?
- B. The Field (John 4:35 in context of the Samaritan woman). Is this how we treat people?



I. CALL OUT OF:

- C. Like Sheep (Mark 6:24). Do we know any with aimless and wandering lives?
- D. Sin



II. WHO CAN COME? (REV. 22:17)

SPIRIT AND THE “BRIDE” SAY COME??? WHO IS THE BRIDE?

- A. All who are weak and heavy laden (Matt. 11:28)
- B. The poor (James 2:1-12)
- C. Chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15)
- D. Racially and culturally mixed (John 4)
- E. The elite (John 3, Acts 9)
- F. Jews (Romans 1:16, 17)
- G. Gentiles (Romans 1:21-32)
- H. Those sifted like wheat (Luke 22:31)
- I. Publicans and sinners (Luke 7:34)
- J. Those whose sins are many (Luke 7:36-49)
- K. Feeble minded and weak (1 Thess. 5:14)

III. FORGIVING/FORGIVEN

A. Blood of Jesus cleanses from ALL sin (**I John 1:6,7**)

C. **Isaiah 53:4-6**



Man's depiction of Jesus' suffering.

IV. OBSTACLES WITHIN THE CHURCH

- A. Diotrophes (**3 John 9**)
- C. Prodigal Son's Brother (**Luke 15:1,2 then verse 11**)
- D. Shaming and Guilting (**Gal. 6:1**)
- E. Gossip, backbiting and slander (**James 3:1-11 esp. 9-10**)
- F. Bitterness (**Eph. 4:31**)



V. BARNABUS = ENCOURAGER

- A. From the first, he is giving and setting an example (**Acts 4:36**).
- C. First to accept Paul into the Jerusalem church (**Acts 9:26ff**). What must it have been like to have been Saul – whole life turned upside down – in transition – and people afraid of him? Might have been easy to be disillusioned, BUT BARNABAS...
- E. John Mark – (**Acts 13:13**) – Turned back when needed. BUT BARNABAS wanted to extend another opportunity even though Paul disagreed strongly (**Acts 15:37-39**).

V. BARNABUS = ENCOURAGER

- D. Even Barnabas (**Gal. 1**) – Paul almost in amazement says this. It was a moment of discrimination and Barnabas got caught up in it. **EVEN BARNABAS.**

- E. His name was not BARNABAS – but Joseph (**Acts 4:36**). BARNABAS was his nickname. Now if the “apostles” or “the brethren” were to nickname you what would your name be: “brother smiley”, sister prayerful, the sourpusses, brother grouchy.....what? What one word describes how you are perceived by others?????

VI. WELCOME

- A. Hospitality (“to afford a generous welcome”)
- C. Confess (**1 John 1:6-10**) (homologio – one on one confession)
- C. Confess (**James 5:16**) (exeolegio – open, frank, public). What is to be confessed? “Our faults” – i.e. share your journey – you need to tell it – we need to learn from it.

VI. WELCOME

- D. Not convinced??? Look at Paul – he kept telling his story (**Acts 9, 22, 26; Gal. 3:4-7**)
- F. We, like Paul, need to visit our past – not to glory – but to remember where we were and to help others who walk behind us to find the path we followed.



VII. A WELCOMING CHURCH IS:

- A. A Rejoicing Church (**Phil. 4:4**)
- B. A Weeping Church (**Rom. 12:15**)
- C. An Uplifting Church (**1 Thess. 5:11**)
- D. A Peaceful Church (**1 Thess. 5:12-17**)
- E. A Loving Church (**1 Cor. 13**)
- F. A Refreshing Church (**1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 7:13; 2 Tim. 1:16; Philemon 7**)
- G. A Serving Church (**John 13**)
- H. A Group of Beggars showing other beggars where to find bread (**Romans 3:23**)
- I. A place of Acceptance where we can share and heal (**James 5:16-18**)

CONCLUSION

1. You are not alone – There is a fellowship of people to help you – We are in this together.

3. Luke 15:8-10

