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**HOW TO RETAIN PEOPLE THROUGH FOLLOW-UP**

**AND DISCIPLESHIP**

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**SEEING YOUR CONVERTS GROW IN CHRIST**

Throughout the years I have seen many Christians who possessed a great passion to share their faith in courageous ways. They would seize every opportunity the Lord would bring across their paths to be faithful witnesses for Him. I embrace this same passion wholeheartedly! What a thrill it is to share God’s wonderful message of salvation with someone and then see that person make a personal decision to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. That one decision changes his life and eternity forever!

However, as a soulwinner, I need to ask myself some heart-wrenching questions regarding the people that the Lord has allowed me to influence for Christ:

1. How are the people I led to Christ doing in their spiritual walk?
2. Are these new believers learning about the Christian life?
3. Are they growing in their devotion to the Lord?
4. Are they experiencing the joy of knowing Jesus as their Saviour?
5. Have I left them behind to grow on their own?

Before someone comes to the conclusion that I am not for reaching people with the Gospel, let me say I am for reaching **everyone** with the Gospel. But I am also aware of the verse that convicts me so many times in the Gospel of John: *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”* John 15:16

My heart’s desire is to lead as many as I possibly can to the Lord, but also, I have a deep burning passion to see them grow in the knowledge of the Lord! I believe the Apostle Paul embodied this desire.

*For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.* Colossians 1:9–10

**Galatians 4:19,** *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,*

The following are a few thoughts that I pray will help you see more of your fruit remain:

1. Spiritual growth is God’s desire for all of His children.
2. Realize that God wants to use you not only to lead others to Christ, but also to bring them into a deeper relationship with Him.
3. Accept the challenge.
4. Pray for wisdom as you mentor these new believers.
5. Introduce them to other growing Christians. Never underestimate the value of relationships.
6. Use scheduled church events to aid you in their growth process.
7. Continue to share Biblical truths with them.
8. Allow them to see Christianity in action through your life.
9. Be their friend!
10. Believe God! Not only can the Lord save someone, but believe He can also transform a life.

Personally, I would like to see every new Christian experience the joy that fills our lives when we allow the Lord to work in our hearts. It is my desire that some of these thoughts will challenge and equip you so that, together, we will see more fruit that remains!

The ministry of the church is multi-faceted, and at times somewhat complex.

If we were to ask each other what the most important ministries of the church are, most, if not all of us, would hands down say the preaching and the soulwinning ministries of the church would rank at the top. Although this is true, we are reminded that the church is made of people and the number and kind of people you have determines how far your church will go.

Paul and Barnabas, by their example, have given us a strong exhortation and example about the best practices for building the church ministry.

They had established churches in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. In the Scripture we see them returning to these cities to strengthen the spiritual lives of believers.

**A RETENTION STRATEGY INVOLVES A FOLLOW-UP PLAN**

**I. An Effective *Follow-Up Plan***

1. Two things are involved.
2. Personal follow-up.
3. Team follow-up.
4. Personal follow-up is you continuing to work with the person after you lead them to Christ.
5. Team follow-up is when you team up with another person, persons or program to help them to grow.
6. Both the personal and team follow-up is very important.
7. Every soul winner should have a written prospect record or diary.
8. Compile contact information about people you have met who are receptive to the Gospel or the idea of attending your church.
9. Include the names and information of saved people you would like to see become faithful to church.
10. Use your record or diary to keep record of their attendance.
11. Use your record or diary as a prospect gathering tool of other possible family members, neighbors with similarities.
12. **Every Soulwinner Should Pray For *Wisdom* In Discerning The Intentions Of Their Prospect**

Categorize your prospects as:

1. Good or Hot
2. Fair or Lukewarm
3. Poor or Cold

**III. Every Soulwinner Should Be Committed To
*Reach And Grow* Their Prospect**

1. Set a goal for “x” number of people you will attempt to bring to church.
2. Use the law of averages to determine how many people you need to speak to in order to develop one prospect.
3. Invite the prospect to church, or Sunday School class.
4. Offer to provide transportation within the church guidelines.
5. Go back within a reasonable period of time while you are still fresh on their mind.
6. Be aware of special church events that can be an extra incentive to invite people to attend.
7. When the prospect is either “lukewarm” or “hot,” the first thirty days are important for laying a foundation for a favorable return.
8. Let them know that you will be praying for them and that you will ask your pastor to pray for them.
9. Ask your prospect to let you call, text or email them about attending the church services.
10. “What time are you normally available from work or school?”
11. “Can I make a phone appointment with you at “\_\_\_\_\_\_” this coming “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”?
12. Plan your soulwinning visits so that you can visit a prospect at the end of your visitation time.
13. Keep materials with you that you can use in your follow-up visits.
14. Determine to be a friend to your prospect.

**A RETENTION STRATEGY INVOLVES FOLLOW-UP BY THE SOUL WINNER**

**I. Follow-Up *Timelines***

1. Cold prospects—once every 60-90 days
2. Lukewarm prospects—once every 14-28 days
3. Hot prospects—once a week

**II. Approach**

Telephone, text or email

“I was just checking in to see how you and your family are doing. How can I pray for you this week?

“Can I share a wonderful Bible promise that will encourage you this week?” Then share something about God’s love or comfort for the sinner.

**III. In *Person***

“I was in the neighborhood, and thought I would drop by to let you know I have been praying for you. How can I pray for you this week?”

“I was in the neighborhood, and thought you might enjoy reading this book.”

“I was in the neighborhood, and wanted to let you know about a special Sunday we are having. Would you be my guest?”

**IV. Invitation**

“Can I invite you to enroll in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ class to help you get a better understanding of what we have been talking about?”

“Can I invite you to enroll in our adult Bible class? We are currently studying \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

**A RETENTION STRATEGY INVOLVES FOLLOW-UP PLAN**

**I. The *Purpose* in Discipleship**

1. A Biblical Foundation for New and Immature Christians.
2. New and immature believers are overwhelmed when it comes to understanding the Bible, the benefits of salvation, and how to live for God.
3. To establish the believer in the faith

*“Confirming the souls of the disciples…”- Acts 14:22*

1. To edify the believer in the faith

*“Exhorting them to continue in the faith…”- Acts 14:22*

1. To encourage the believer in the faith
*“And that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.” - Acts 14:22*
2. A Biblical Focal Point for Assimilating New Members (church transfers) into the Church
3. Doctrinal confirmation

Discipleship helps drive home what the church believes and teaches about core doctrines. It also flushes out any issues up front.

1. Devotional connection

Discipleship helps to connect the new individual(s) to the Pastor as well as the vision and program of the church.

1. A Basis for Friendships and Relationships in the Church
2. New believers will build friendships with the teacher or facilitator and other members of the class.
3. New believers will have an immediate prayer network that is praying for them.

**II. The *Process* in Discipleship**

1. The Studies or Curriculum
There are two curriculums: the King James Bible and a discipleship work booklet.
2. The senior pastor of the church should be consulted as to his preference.
3. We have used use the *ABC’s of Christian Discipleship* produced by Robert Sargent. We are presently using the *One Step at a Time* series by Dr. Mike Ray and myself.
4. Whatever you do, make sure it covers the necessary subjects for new and growing believers and that it uses the King James Bible and is Baptist in emphasis.
5. The pastor needs to be thoroughly familiar with the curriculum being used.
6. The Supervisors
7. Who will be your disciplers and trainers? They should be people who are 100% loyal to the pastor and his ministry.
8. It is recommended that the pastor be involved at the beginning stages of this ministry to have good familiarity with the process.
9. The initial disciplers and trainers should be trained by the pastor.
10. Disciplers and trainers should be able to convey the heart of the pastor through discipleship.
11. Disciplers and trainers need to follow the example of nursing mothers and encouraging fathers in their approach to discipline (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11)
12. The Setting or Class
13. The span can be different depending on your program.

 a. Basic Discipleship (Lessons 1-10)

 b. Adavanced Discipleship (Lessons 11-26)

 c. Premier Discipleship (Lessons 27-43)

1. The size - one on one, new members class, group Bible study - determination needs to be made on maximum class size.
2. The sameness: men with men, women with women; the following is not recommended:

 a. Husband and wife teaching a single woman

b. Couples with couples without the pastor’s express approval

 c. Women teaching men

1. The schedule - location and time

 a. Sunday nights

1.) New church plants might want this material to initially use this for their mid week service Bible Study time.

2.) We do it at 5:00 - 5:45 p.m. and have the attendees transition to the mid week service from there.

 b. Sunday school

 c. Wednesday evening

1. The Standard
2. Preparation
3. Students must complete the lesson plan before each class, and come prepared with questions.
4. Participation
5. All students will take a section of the lesson and give their answers (in the Advanced and Premier Program)
6. Punctuality
7. A decision should be made on how many classes a student will be allowed to miss.
8. Progress

a. The disciplers should give a weekly report to the pastor and the appointed director of the discipleship program.

b. Discipleship is not done on a pass or fail basis; rather it is on a complete or incomplete basis.

c. Students who complete the entire series should be recognized with a certificate of completion that is given to them as part of a church service.

**III. The *Product* through Discipleship**

1. Safeguarding People Added to the Church and Preparing Them for Leadership.
2. Discipleship is the tool that helps retain new believers in the church.
3. Disciples are not afraid to ask questions in a one-on-one setting.
4. These disciples are excited about the church and its ministries!
5. Stability

*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* Ephesians 4:14

1. Spiritual Growth

*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*Colossians 2:6-7

1. Succession

*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* 2 Timothy 2:2