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# The Messenger



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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Listen to PROVE ALL THINGS on 730 AM WKRE, Sunday mornings from 8:15 to 8:30.

## Friendliness

by Dempsey Collins

“And if you greet your brothers only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?” (Matthew 5:47)

A disciple of Jesus is expected to be different from the rest of the world. We have different standards, different priorities, different goals, etc. One of the ways we are to be distinct from the world is in our treatment of others. We expect a Christian to be friendly toward another Christian, but Jesus asked, “What do ye more than others?” It is clear from His question and the context, that Jesus expects us to be kind and friendly toward all men.

A. Kindness is essential to the conversion of the lost.

1. “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance.” (Romans 2:4)
2. Paul taught the Gentile audience in Lystra that “God did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your heart with food and gladness.” (Acts 14:17)
3. In Matthew 5:45, Jesus reminds us that God’s physical blessings are not reserved for the righteous alone. God is kind to all, hoping by such kindness to lead men to repentance.
4. If we are truly “sons of God” (Matthew 5:45) then we must also be kind toward all men for the same reason. A spirit of friendliness is essential to the conversion of the lost.

B. Practical ways to show friendliness at our assemblies.

Visitors from the community are generally looking for one primary element in their efforts to “find a church”. We, of course, wish their main objective would be the pursuit of truth, but unfortunately they usually haven’t arrived at that stage. Many of our visitors have few, if any, substantial relationships in life. Most have personally experienced the anguish of an uncaring and unmerciful world. What these world-weary searchers need from us is something only Jesus’ true disciples can provide, i.e., genuine love.

Jesus considers this one badge of our discipleship in John 13:35, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

This quest among us is seeking good reliable friends. Will you be his friend? He is looking for a congregation that truly loves one another in hope that they will also love and accept him. Will you show this kindness to him? Here are some practical ways to show friendliness to our guests. (These five points are adapted from the bulletin – *Riverside Weekly*).

1. **Friendliness can begin in the parking lot.** Rather than rushing in, take some time to look around for visitors who may be coming in. Introduce yourself and others. Invite them to go with you to your Bible class and do all you can to make them feel welcome and comfortable.
2. **Be on time or even early to the services.** We cannot take time to greet visitors if we are running in the last minute or even a few minutes past the last one. Late arrivals leave a bad impression, disturb those already taking part in the service and waste the time of everyone. Show your concern for your own soul and others by being early to welcome people to our service.
3. **Another good suggestion that we can work on** is to start taking a seat closer to the front and leave the back rows for those who might arrive later or for mothers of small children. Leaving the seats close to the aisle helps, so that visitors don't have to climb over other people.
4. **When the worship service begins, participate.** Participate in the singing enthusiastically. Let others know that you love the Lord and you enjoy worshipping Him. Zeal and enthusiasm are contagious. People enjoy being in a worship service where it is evident that the true joy of Christian service is felt. Make sure that those visitors close to you have a songbook. It is embarrassing to sit through several verses of an unfamiliar song without a book.
5. **When the services are over, don't rush immediately over to the same group of people after each service.** Make it a point to greet all of the visitors and also the members of the church that you seldom talk to or see. Don't rush out of the services as quickly as you can.

You may feel shy and uncomfortable talking to those you don't know real well, but with some work, you can overcome this feeling and do a good work for yourself and others.

In short, when it comes to making the congregation here friendlier, ***Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*** Everyone who has visited other congregations knows how uncomfortable it is when you do not feel welcome and how good it feels when you go somewhere new and leave feeling as if you are at home.

## CONCLUSION

The kingdom of Christ will only attract the lost when we are different. If our character parallels that of the unbelievers around us then why should they want to be a part of the Lord's body? If our disposition is no different than theirs, then what is the appeal to the outsider?

Jesus asked, "What do ye more than others?" It is clear from His question and the context, that our Lord expects us to do better than the unbeliever when it comes to matters of the heart. Friendliness toward all men is one important way to show an unkind world the difference Christ has made in your life.

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## News and Notes:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses. *"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* James 5:16

## **Westlake Families – Mark Your Calendars:**

- ✓ Sunday, October 4 – Congregational Meeting at 5:00 p.m.
- ✓ Saturday, October 10 – Distribute flyers door-to-door, Meet at the building at 9:00 a.m.
- ✓ Sunday, October 11 – Bring a friend