



Increasing *Guest Engagement*

101: Open the Front Door

Guest Engagement Begins with Guest Perspective





There are several front doors to your church.

There is the literal front door.

The digital front door.

But there is also the front door to your church's culture.

Guest typically walk through all three before connecting.



Even if you have new people trying your church out, the question remains: How do I get them to stick?

Solving this begins with understanding the guest's perspective.

This is why we must walk a mile in the shoes of our guests.

A large collection of sneakers is displayed on a white perforated metal grid wall. The sneakers are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some models appearing in multiple rows. The colors of the sneakers vary widely, including white, black, blue, red, yellow, green, and orange. Some sneakers have distinctive patterns or designs. A large red banner with the text "The Shoe Game" is overlaid across the center of the image. A yellow diagonal shape is on the left side, and a green diagonal shape is on the bottom right corner.

The Shoe Game

When I first became a runner I heard about this amazing shoe store in town that only sold running shoes. It was called Varsity Sports and their entire business model revolved around serving runners.

Here's the thing though... Even though this was the best store in the city for me to shop, solely focus on supporting my running hobby, it took me years to go inside for the first time.

Why?



I knew they had the best advice and resource for runners which meant that they also had the best runners in the store.

This made me afraid that I would not measure up to their expectations. What if they asked me something I did not know? Would they judge me for the shoes I had been wearing? What if I went in and looked stupid?

It is the same for our church guests!



People will come to your church for the first time with wrong assumptions, misunderstandings, and mistrust about your church.

We have to earn and build that trust before connection.

If you do not address these perspectives right away, you will not reach people as effectively through your message and connection processes.

We must think like guests not members.





Understand the *Guest Perspective.*

First-time guests often arrive with apprehension.

They're asking: "Do I like these people? Do they like me?"

Warm, intentional connection increases retention and future discipleship.

Welcoming *Culture.*

- Begins in the parking lot. You are welcoming people, not parking cars.
- Continues at the door with a greeting.
- No need to hug or shake every person's hand. Smile, wave, and offer contact when appropriate.
- Clear signs and attentive people create comfort, trust and buy-in from guests.

Welcoming *Language*

- Do not call people visitors.
- Some churches do not even call new people guests because it implies that they will not be staying.
- Instead they are new to [your church name].
- “If you are new to our church or feel new...”
- Do not ask, “Is this your first time?”
- Ask, “How long have you been attending?”

Welcoming *Expectations*

- Signage inside and out helps people feel comfortable in your unfamiliar [to them] space.
- A worship guide answers their immediate questions about your church.
- A worship welcome lets them know what to expect.
- Addressing them in the worship transition lets them know how to self-identify and what steps to take.
- Designated information area lets them know where to get help.



Allow people to be *anonymous*.

- Not everyone wants attention in front of a group.
- *Welcome guest as a group.*
- Give next steps for individuals.
- *Some people want to observe before taking a step.*
- New people may attend up several times before taking a step.

“When you take time to see how others are experiencing you as a church, what you are really doing is making sure that you are serving and loving them well.”

**It's about
*serving.***

Understand then Connect

If you have ever studied the Five Love Languages, you know you can be putting your maximum effort into something that is not very meaningful to the person to whom you wish to show appreciation.

It is the same with your church experience.

It's about
serving.

Understand then Connect

Instead of asking people to come up to where we are, we should be willing to come down to them and ask, “How can I help you?” We do this by being ready to see things from others’ points of view and making the adjustments to help them take their first steps of faith.



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