

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

More Church Engagement Q&A

Episode 109

Engagement Strategies for Pre-Guest, Empty-Nesters, Transient Areas, Online Services and More

We recently hosted a webinar on the topic of [increasing church engagement](#), and as part of the event, we fielded questions from people who tuned in. We weren't able to get through all of the questions live, so in this episode, we're digging a bit deeper.

Pre-Visit Engagement

- You really need a two-prong strategy for engaging people *before* they become a first-time guest: **intentionality about how we equip people** to develop relationships with others + a **content marketing strategy**.
- In our culture today, most people live isolated lives. Your congregation needs to be reminded about how to develop relationships with folks in their neighborhoods and offices and where they gather socially.
- An invite-culture only works within the context of authentic relationships—90% of people will come to a church for the first time because they were invited by friends or family.
- Content marketing is a strategy for attracting people through relevant, helpful content and trying to add value at every stage in their journey.
- Monitoring engagement with your content can also give you insight into the questions normal people are asking about life and spiritual things, which can both help you better engage with them before they are a guest at your church, as well as inform your message series and sermon preparation for the weekend.

Serving

- There's an assumption in a lot of church teams that it's easier to ask people to serve in the community than in the church. But in practice, that's not proving to be true. It may be easy to get people to serve *once* for some kind of event or opportunity in the community, but ongoing engagement is more challenging.
- If you're effectively helping people engage their gifts to fulfill the mission of the body of Christ, it may not necessarily matter whether it's inside the church or outside. Your team needs to decide on the win within your context.

Empty-Nesters & Transient Areas

- In communities that have a lot of transition—like college towns or military communities—you have to help people move quickly into group relationships and serving opportunities. Try to eliminate extraneous steps and make sure you're offering frequent on-ramps for people to engage.
- To engage more empty-nesters, take a step back and assess how well you're casting the vision. Does your church understand you are trying to reach a community that doesn't yet have faith in Jesus? That you're trying to build a multigenerational that's reaching all generations, including their kids and grandkids? If that vision is in front of people on a regular basis, it's a lot easier to engage empty nesters and retirees in your mission.
- Most people want to leave a legacy for the next generation. Help people in your church entering that next stage of life to prepare for it. Give people who are spiritually mature and able to disciple others opportunities to mentor others.
- Create higher level leadership roles in the volunteer ranks. Many retirees have a high capacity to lead. Identify them and don't expect them to just come shake hands or wave a flag in the parking lot. Think about how you could invite them to help you solve real challenges.

Tracking Discipleship Steps & Online Engagement

- How do you re-engage people who took a few steps on your discipleship path and stalled out? Step back and look at your path and systems. Why didn't they continue to the next step? Is there something about how you're presenting the opportunity that's unappealing?
- Essentially, take time to evaluate, "Was it something we could improve, or was it just them?" But don't spill your wheels: Not every person is going to walk through your spiritual formation process the same way, at the same pace.
- To increase engagement from streaming services, look at the online experience just like you do an experience in your physical space. Welcome guests, encourage them to take a next step through chat, email, texting, an online form, etc. And importantly, invite them to actually come to a service.
- Our [most recent data](#) suggests streaming services has become a new front door for our churches.

Next Steps

- Listen to [Episode 61 - Why Church Communication Is Stuck in 2004](#). We share more about how your church can think about content marketing and tools you can use to start.
- Listen to [Episode 97 - Increasing First Time Guests](#). Jeff Brodie from Connexus Church shares a strategy that's working to foster relationships and make an invite-culture possible and effective.
- Check out the [Vital Signs Assessment](#), our online tool to help you track and benchmark your church health metrics. It's available in our [online resource store](#).

Listen to the episode on iTunes or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode109.