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Being 'Church'

8. Church is a welcoming community - part 2

Introduction

This is the second of two studies on the topic of being a welcoming community. We have already touched on our 'welcoming' attitudes and actions as individuals. This study is now concerned with church as a welcoming body and developing a team strategy for welcoming at church.

Discussion starter

Have you ever felt out of place or un-welcome at a social or community gathering? What gave you that impression? Did you go back? What would it have taken for you to have felt welcome?

Clarifying the message:

- (a) Read **1 Thessalonians 2:5-12** where Paul describes his team's attitude while amongst the Thessalonians for the first time (even though Paul was on their 'turf', his role as an ambassador for Christ made his team the ones really extending the welcome to the Thessalonians). What was their attitude towards the Thessalonians?
- (b) How might Paul's model of team ministry (cf 1:1; 3:1-2), and his team's attitude, impact a welcoming strategy for our church?

Living the message today

Last week we had some homework (hopefully you were able to do some of it!). First of all, did anyone interview a relatively new member of our church? If so, what did you learn about us?

The Welcoming Checklist.

1. Share your individual responses to the checklist. Identify the areas where most of your group feel we are doing well.
2. Then identify those areas where some improvement is needed. List these separately.
3. Divide your home group into threes or fours. Give each small group two or three of these areas to work on, answering the question: "How can we take practical action to improve this area"?
4. All groups report their findings. These should be recorded and passed on to the Ministry Area Team (MAT) responsible for your congregation(s).
5. Pray: especially for those who are new at our church, and for people whom you might like to invite along some time.

Last Sunday's sermon was about being a worshipping church. We saw from Rom 12:1-8 that worship is a 'whole-of-life' response to God's grace—more than merely singing God's praise in church, we love, we serve, we give, we help, in whatever way we can. In what ways can welcoming be an expression of worship?