



How friendly is your church: Sunday meeting audit

Why not get someone to audit your church one Sunday morning. This could either be one of your leaders, church members (better, because they may not know how things are supposed to work), or a 'mystery shopper' non-Christian friend (best still, they will be really honest!).

Use this checklist as a prompt to review just how friendly you are! And then do something about it.

“small details make a big difference”

Author: Jeremy Bray
© Salt & Light Ministries (Europe) 2005
www.saltlight.org/europe

1. Arrival

Do people know where to go, where to park? Do you have adequate signs up? Is the entrance reasonably inviting?

2. Welcome

Are people welcomed outside the hall with a smile? A friendly welcome is vital to gather people and put them at ease. We put our best people on welcome. A new environment can make people feel insecure and someone giving them a newsheet and steering them kindly to a chair is often appreciated.

3. Newsheet

Does this explain things to visitors or have a plan to show exits, toilets, refreshments, children's work? We have a colouring section on the back of our newsheet for children and we keep a box of crayons on the information desk. Whatever you give to people says a lot about you – are all your notices inhouse? Is the design drab? What will people pick up about God from how you use your newsheet?

4. Before you start

Do people greet visitors while they are waiting for the meeting to begin?

5. Meeting leader

Does the meeting leader welcome people, explain what is going to happen and make newcomers feel at home? If prophecies or tongues are given, does the leader explain what is going on?

6. Worship

Do you ever plan in songs that most people would recognise even if they have never been in a church meeting before? (Amazing Grace, Danny Boy, Abide with me etc!)

7. Preaching

What is the language like? Are theological words explained?

People may not know Bible stories, where to find the book of Hebrews, or the names of famous Christian speakers, so a short explanation will help. We provide simple briefing notes for speakers with some do's and don'ts. Encourage the speaker to mingle afterwards and connect with people, not just with their friends.

8. Children's work

Do you explain where it's all happening? Do the children's workers realise how vital they are in welcoming new adults and children and making them feel at home?

9. The interval

We have a 5 minute break after the worship time to allow children to go to various groups and to give time for parents to take their seats again without the embarrassment of disturbing the sermon. Just put on some background music and mingle for a few minutes. People who will dash off as soon as the meeting finishes can be greeted during this time and it also allows chain smokers to replenish nicotine levels.

10. Refreshments

Do you give time for people to meet before or after the meeting, and do you ensure that all visitors are engaged in conversation and made welcome? Those providing refreshments are vital too – new people will be put off by a grunt and a slammed down 6 pint of semi-skimmed. A smile and a “hello” make all the difference. We find that people with non-Christian partners are turning up for the refreshment time. Why not invite people waiting in the car park to come in for a cuppa?

11. Acknowledging visitors

In our culture, people don't usually like to be singled out, so let new people just come and see what's going on and welcome them privately – don't embarrass them publicly. You should have a welcome pack that they can take away with them, and direct them to your information board. If there are too many people to deal with individually, have a manned information desk that the meeting leader can direct visitors to if they need any details about the church.

12. Caring for the disabled

Do you ensure that your meeting venue is accessible for people? A loop system helps with hearing problems, and video projection of songs and sermon notes helps lip readers to feel part of the meeting. Small details make a big difference.

13. Finish on time

It's good to honour people. If you say a meeting will finish at noon then make sure it does. Stick to your promises and people will learn to trust you.