

# FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM

## TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF *BRING A FRIEND*

In order to rescue people, you have to get close to them and be involved in their lives. These things take time and are an intentional sacrifice in today's busy culture. You won't ever be in a position to be a rescuer if you aren't intentional. Below are eight steps to help you become more effective in your efforts to reach people for Christ.

### STEP 1: HAVE EYES TO SEE THE LOST

1. **Enter their world.** Jesus went through Samaria to reach the Samaritan woman (John 4). He did not expect them to come to Him, He went to them. Are you willing to actively go after the lost? Where is your Samaria (work, school)?
2. **Rescuers all go into dangerous situations to save the perishing** (firefighters, lifeguards, etc.). Being a spiritual rescuer may require going against your natural instinct to protect yourself from rejection. Are you willing to get out of your comfort zone?
3. Do you **make it a point to interact with the lost people in your life** or do you find yourself spending time with only those that believe as you do? If you are primarily surrounded by other Christians in your daily life, how can you commit to broaden your exposure to non-believers? What activity might increase your contact with the lost?
4. **Don't let busyness stop you.** Everyone is busy, but the Great Commission instructs us to go make disciples. This means we may need to find creative ways to make time. If busyness is keeping you out of the harvest fields, what are you willing to change to make time? This may mean eliminating something "good" to make time for the "urgent." Or it may be as simple as reducing "screen time" in your life.
5. What if you struggle to **feel the burden to do personal evangelism**? Start praying. Ask God to break your heart for the lost and give you sense of urgency to do something about it.

### STEP 2: MAKE AN INITIAL ACQUAINTANCE

Relationships take time to develop, so now is the time to start. If you wait two weeks before the Celebration, you can't expect people to respond.

**Go after ONE.** Have no idea who?

- List the names of everyone you can think of that doesn't know Christ on your *Bring A Friend* card.
- Ask God to put on your heart the one person He wants you to reach out to. He *will* answer, because it is His will that none should perish.

**If God puts someone on your heart that you barely know** or are just a casual acquaintance with, start with the basics.

- Ask God to show you how to reach out to this person. In an increasingly anonymous society, people respond to personal touches - smile, use eye contact, and remember names (theirs and their family).
- Ask God to provide opportunities to interact and engage. Move beyond "hello" and start to engage them in casual conversations. If you only see them at the mailbox each night, take a few minutes to walk over to them and talk.

- Ask God to show you what you have in common instead of focusing on your differences. As a Jew, Jesus had nothing in common with the Samaritan woman at the well, so He started with the only thing they did have in common – He asked her for a drink from the well. Maybe you both like the same sports, or both have an aging parent?

**If you already know the person fairly well**, you can move on to identifying ways to be more intentional with your friendship. As you do this, the people you are trying to reach will take notice - we call this creating *spiritual curiosity*. There are two main ways to create spiritual curiosity:

- Practical Love – Steps 3-8 will address practical acts of kindness (they don't necessarily have to be done in order)
- Practical Differences - Being different in ways that matter. **EX:** If you want to reach a co-worker or boss, **be** a good worker (the one who pitches in, doesn't gossip, and doesn't steal all the credit). If you want to reach a sibling, **be** a good sibling (let past grievances go, be their cheerleader).

### STEP 3: ESTABLISH A GROWING RELATIONSHIP

Deepen friendships by showing Jesus to people in tangible ways and creating spiritual curiosity. The more we get to know people, the more we'll know where they are spiritually and how best to respond. Consider the following:

#### **Love them in their language.**

Often, sincere acts of service will reach a hardened or unreceptive heart. Ask yourself, "What need does this person have that I can help with?"

#### **Pray for their concerns.**

- Ask if you can pray **for** them - "Do you mind if I pray about that for you?"
- Ask if you can pray **with** them at that very moment. - They'll likely say yes, but if they turn you down, you haven't lost anything. People are rarely offended by this, because your request is simply showing you care for them. You're also showing that your relationship with God is personal.

### STEP 4: EXTEND AN INVITATION TO YOUR HOME

One simple way to increase the significance of your friendship is by inviting this person to your home and sharing a meal with them.

- **Keep it casual.** It's good to have a reason for the invitation: A BBQ, to try a favorite dessert, or even celebrating a small event in your lives (start of summer, end of school, etc.).
- **Don't feel that you have to discuss anything spiritual.** This is just about sharing your life and home with this person.
- **Do say grace at your meal**, since it is your home and your practice. Keep it short and simple, thanking God for your friend by name.
- If opening your home is not an option, invite them to meet you at a restaurant or coffee shop.

## STEP 5: CULTIVATE COMMON INTERESTS

By now you should be able to identify common interests. To begin cultivating those interests more intentionally:

- **Practice active listening.** Ask thoughtful questions about the things they are interested in.
- **Think of things you can DO together** to build the friendship and live life with them, just as Jesus did with His disciples. Find something you both enjoy and get it on the calendar this month.
- **Remember that common interests aren't always activities.** Perhaps you are both dealing with a sick family member. When common concerns are mentioned, follow up with questions that invite a more personal response, like, "How are you handling that?"

## STEP 6: BE AVAILABLE FOR THE HURTING

People remember sacrificial deeds and simple acts of kindness when life is tough. Whether it is a sickness, funeral, or job loss:

- **Be practical.** In addition to praying for them, provide a meal or gift card, write a heartfelt e-mail or note, or mow a lawn, for example.
- **Listen with compassion.** Don't preach to them or offer unsolicited advice. You do not have to provide all the answers, you just need to be present in their life.
- **Consider letting them help you.** It's okay for them to know that you struggle, too. If you need help and they offer, let them be a friend to you. This may be the greatest gift you can give them.
- **Don't forget to celebrate the good times.** Romans 12:15 reminds us to "*Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*" Attend weddings and birthdays or send a note acknowledging the good in their lives (accomplishments, special milestones, etc.).

## STEP 7: BECOME A GIVER

**Offer your friend something to read, watch, or listen to that will help create spiritual curiosity.**

- These items don't necessarily have to have a gospel presentation, but should serve as a starting point for further conversations.
- Offer the gift as a genuine response to their felt needs/questions.
- Be sure to follow-up with them about what they think.

**Potential ideas for lending or giving:**

- Christian books that are applicable to felt needs (parenting, finances, stress, etc.).
- Christian music in a genre they like.
- Quality movies that highlight Christian themes.

## STEP 8: FIND AN APPROPRIATE HARVEST VEHICLE

When the time is right, introduce them to an outreach where the Gospel will be presented. This is your opportunity to invite them to the ***Greater Fort Wayne Celebration with Will Graham!***

**What if you sense they are ready *before* or *after* the Celebration?** Not everyone will be ready to go to church with you on a Sunday morning to hear the Gospel, so consider alternatives. Think about events that what would best suit their personality and preferences, such as:

- Church outreach events
- Christian concerts (where you know the Gospel will be presented)
- Christian conferences or retreats
- Bible study groups
- Christian movies/videos that share the Gospel clearly.
- Be prepared to share the Gospel yourself! You don't want your friend to have to wait for the next event in order to hear the Gospel. Come to the ***Christian Life & Witness Course*** (Starting the week of August 21) to learn simple tools for sharing the Gospel.

### ABOVE ALL ELSE - KEEP PRAYING

Don't get discouraged, some people will respond quickly, others may take years.

Remember to pray for the rest of your *Bring A Friend* list. Even though you are focusing on ONE, keep praying for everyone on your list. You may be surprised by how many open doors God gives you.