
COME AND SEE

In this last part of the year we are creating so many opportunities where people from our community will be invited to come and experience a loving family where they can take their next steps to experiencing life with Jesus.

A lot of Christians think that they won't be warmly received when it comes to talking about faith, God and church. So, for many, it feels like inviting people to church and even a Christmas celebration might hurt our relationships with the people in our lives.

This defeatist approach to reaching out and inviting does us, and the people we love, no good. The assumption that the people in our world are opposed to us sharing our faith makes us retreat, apologise and defend instead of being led by love.

- + Recent studies show a different story. Research from McCrindle suggest that almost 2 in 3 (64%) of Australians would come to church if invited.

When it comes to personally reaching out to others our biggest hurdle is fear. Fear that I might do more harm than good. Fear that I will not know what to say. Fear that I may invade someone's privacy. But perhaps the greatest fear, is the fear that I may fail. Yet when we are faithful to share Jesus with others, He is responsible for the results.

You Really Need to Meet Him – John 1:36-42

The result of spending time with Jesus was that Andrew realised that he had possession of information that was too good to keep to himself. We should be wanting all our friends and family to come and meet Jesus.

The most effective means of bringing people to Jesus is one at a time, on an individual basis.

Every time we come across Andrew in John's gospel; he is bringing someone to Jesus.

- + John 6:5-13
- + John 12:20-23

Andrew is an ordinary guy who is passionate about people meeting Jesus. Anyone can invite someone else to come and see about Jesus for themselves.

Come and See – John 1:43-46

Like Andrew, Philip was not one of the most well-known of the disciples. Philip is mentioned alongside Andrew in John 6 and John 12. If Andrew is remembered as just an ordinary guy, Philip would be remembered as being a practical guy.

But we must give Philip some credit when his first reaction after Jesus found him was to go to his friend with the news.

Nathanael the sceptic is not so sure about Jesus being proclaimed as the Messiah. Nathanael, who comes from Cana (John 21:2), can't believe that anything good would come from Nazareth, a rival village just up the road from Cana.

Come and see for yourself, Nathanael. Philip didn't try to argue the point convincingly and was wise enough to know that he could not argue Nathanael out of his scepticism, so he simply suggests that Nathanael come and see for himself if what he said about Jesus is true.

We are all supposed to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have, with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). But sometimes the best answer about Jesus is to come and see for yourself.

Jesus Sees Those Who Come Searching for Him - John 1:47-49

The assurance we have when inviting people to come to church or come to an outreach event like Christmas is that Jesus knows them and sees them when they come.

Nathanael may have been sceptical, but he went along with his friend Philip to meet this man from Nazareth. When he arrived, the words of Jesus stop Nathanael in his tracks. He has not yet met Jesus or talked to him and yet Jesus sees directly into his heart and accurately describes his character and reads his mail.

- + John 1:47 – a transparent and honest man
- + John 1:48 – I saw you praying, and I know what you asked for

Nathanael had a religious experience that only Jesus knew about. Jesus is still in the business of letting people know that He sees them and knows them, and He often does that through us His children (1 Corinthians 14:24).

Where Heaven Meets Earth - John 1:50-51

Everyone has a need that only Jesus sees and can meet. Jesus reassures Nathanael that this is just the beginning. Jesus says, “Nathanael, because you saw that I am omniscient you believe. You have not seen anything yet!”

Jesus takes Nathanael back almost 2,000 years to the time of Jacob (Genesis 28:10-12) so that he could draw Nathanael’s attention to the fact that He, Jesus is the ladder to heaven. When you’re with Jesus, it is as though you’re in the house of God, the Temple itself, with God’s angels coming and going, and God’s own presence there with you.

A failure to recognise the presence of Jesus is the tragedy of much of the modern Church. As a result, an invitation to Christianity is not very interesting to us, much less to a lost world.

When you invite someone to something at church, the very thing they need is a taste of heaven as they come into the presence of God (Psalm 34:8). His presence is what makes all the difference.

Discussion Questions

1. Share together about the recent opportunities you have had to talk about Jesus with someone who doesn't yet know Him.
2. Have you recently made an invitation to someone to come to something at church where they would be exposed to God's presence and message of the Gospel? How did it go? Share with the group.
3. What, if anything, stops you from inviting people to come and experience Jesus for themselves?
4. How could you be more like Andrew or Philip? Who on your frontline are you desperate to invite to come and see Jesus?
5. Jesus really is the answer to the needs everyone has. Read back through the whole of John chapter one. Make a list of all the titles Jesus has attributed to Him (eg The Word).
6. How could we continue to cultivate a culture where the manifest presence of God is what changes people's lives when we invite them to come and see?
7. Pray and ask Holy Spirit to reveal who it is that you should be inviting to something at Christmas this year. Make a list and then pray for each one by name.