

CREATING A WARM AND FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.” Colossians 4:6-7

In order to make every guest feel welcome, we must understand the following...

► **Creating a warm and friendly environment begins with me!**

I must conduct myself with wisdom toward outsiders. Outsiders are non-Christians and guests. Those of us who have been born-again and are church members are “spiritual insiders.”

► **We must conduct ourselves with wisdom.**

We must not do or say anything that would make it difficult to share the Gospel with a non-Christian or that would keep a guest from visiting again. We must impress people with how much we care rather than how much we know! People do not care how much we know until they know how much we care. We must make the most of the opportunity with outsiders. This is a matter of stewardship! Just as a merchant seizes a bargain when he finds one, so too must the Christian seize an opportunity with an outsider.

► **There are no second chances to make first impressions!**

We must be sensitive to those who visit our Bible Study classes and Worship services and seize the opportunity to make them feel welcome and wanted.

We should adopt the attitude of Stephen Grellet, a French-born Quaker who died in New Jersey in 1855. He is remembered for a few lines he wrote which have been an inspiration to many people through the years.

I shall pass through this world but once. Any good that I can do, or any kindness that I can show any human being, let me do it now and not defer it. For I shall not pass this way again.

► **I must see to it that my speech is controlled by grace.**

Luke 4:22 records that when Jesus began his public ministry, people were “wondering at the gracious words which were falling from his lips.” We too must be like Jesus in our speech with others. Our speech must be appropriate for both the opportunity and the person.

► **I must allow my speech to be seasoned with salt.**

Salt makes people thirsty. Our kind and encouraging words should make outsiders thirst for the things of God. Our seasoned speech should make the non-Christian thirst for the answer that is found only in Christ and it should cause the Christian to thirst for the fellowship of fellow believers.

Don't leave the important matter of greeting guests to chance!

Every member of the church has a responsibility to be friendly, courteous, and helpful to any and every guest.

Remember to speak courteously concerning all areas of your church. If you greet parents in the Preschool area, say a good word about what they can expect in their adult class and in Worship. If you lead an adult class, say a good word to guests about the contribution of those who work in the other Bible Study divisions. Remember that we are all on the same team.

“A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”
Proverbs 25:11 (NIV)