

Church Hospitality

Hospitality is a big word in the church world, and it encapsulates so many different aspects of the “guest experience.” From greeters at the door, to follow up the following week, being perceived as a friendly church is key to having newcomers return for a second visit.

[Phil Cook](#) says people decide what they think about a person or a church in the first 8 seconds; *attention* is the new currency in this new world. No matter what area of hospitality you are looking to develop and improve, we have you covered with a myriad of practical solutions in this simple resource.

Greeters

Greeters are traditionally recognized as the couple at the front door who say “hello” and who hand out weekly bulletins to attendees. What if it could be more than that though? According to Greg Atkinson, author of *“Hospitality Ministry, Equipping to Serve,”* greeting your attendees—especially first-time guests—should start in the parking lot. When a greeter opens a person’s car door, directs that person to the entryway, and then opens the door to the building for that person, the greeter in question has already easily eclipsed the normal greeting practices at most churches. Adding greeters inside the sanctuary to help attendees find a seat is also a simple way for churches to go the extra mile.

8 Tips to Become a Great Greeter

1. Take Them There (Vicki, Timberline Church):
Instead of pointing to where the bathrooms are or the nursery is, take them there.
2. Be Sensitive (Jenni, University Assembly; Nicole, Restoration):
If they look shy or cautious, just greet and welcome them without asking any questions. If they look eager to be “noticed,” ask them a leading question. If they have kids, mention where the children’s ministry is.
3. Be Observant (Pastor Matt, Elevation Church):
Introduce them to a family with which they have something in common.
4. No Holy Huddles:
Pay attention to the job at hand. Avoid huddling up with your friends or other greeters.
5. Greeter Variety:
Using greeters of various ages and genders will help your visitors recognize that there is a place for them at your church. Use teenagers, millennials, and other select demographics.
6. Don’t Ask, “Are You New?”:
Never ask someone if they are new. Instead, you should simply say, “Have I met you before?” They will let you know if it’s their first time, and you won’t offend them by not knowing who they are.

7. Greeter Points:
By identifying “greeter points”—from street to pew—you have more of an opportunity to connect with your first-time guests.
8. Remember Names (Beverly, Amazing Grace):
Remembering names can be very difficult. Greg Atkinson lists 11 different ways to remember someone’s name in his book, *“Hospitality Ministry, Equipping to Serve.”*

More information about Greeters can be found at the following websites:

- [Five Keys to an Incredible Greeters’ Ministry Conversational Smalltalk](#)
- [Top Ten Ways Churches Drive Away First-Time Guests](#)

First Time Visitors

Why should we give gifts to our first-time guests? Rich Birch gives [6 Reasons your Church Should Give Guests Gifts](#):

1. It Shows Guests That You Expected Them!
2. First Impressions Count
3. It Extends the Experience Beyond the Weekend
4. It Adds Clarity to Who You Are
5. It Invites Them to Come Back!
6. It Slows Down the Weekend Experience

So, if we believe that this is an important part of Hospitality in the local church, what are some options that won’t break the bank but will still stand out and make an impression?

1. *Ink pens* with your church name or logo on them. Because pens come in such a variety, you can easily find something that fits your budget.
2. *Water bottles or tumblers* with your church name or logo. You can fill them with candy or simply give them as they are—whatever your budget allows.
3. *Free coffee* from your church’s coffee shop, if your church has one.
4. *\$5 gift card* to a local favorite.
5. *A unique item* such as an ice cream scoop or a rubber spatula with your name or logo on it. This is something they will use on a consistent basis, and it will continually remind them of your church.
6. *Something the entire family can enjoy.*

Be sure to include important information about your church. It needs to include the steps for getting involved with the church, such as: How to sign your children up for youth programs, how to join a Sunday School class, and how to serve as a volunteer.

Simple Dos and Don'ts

1. Do smile – always!
2. Do be at your post thirty minutes before the start of each service time.
3. Do look available to help.
4. Do return to your original post to say goodbye to visitors as they leave.
5. Don't have anything in your hands as you serve—such as your coffee, phone, coat, or purse.
6. Don't frown.
7. Don't do the minimum.
8. Don't overdo the greeting.

For a complete list of Dos and Don'ts, download Greg Atkinson's book, *"Hospitality Ministry, Equipping to Serve."*

Ushers

Ushers play an important role in every church, but their roles don't always look the same. In many churches, the main responsibilities for an usher are to take up the offering each week, serve communion, and count the attendance. In other churches, however, they may have a more intricate role on a Sunday morning.

Ushers can be used as extra greeters, extra security (or they can even double as the main security team), and door monitors. Whatever you choose to use them for, your ushers can help make up that team in your church that gets things done.

Do's and Don'ts of Ushering

- Do recognize the importance of church ushering.
- Do have regular meetings for the purpose of instruction, the interchange of ideas, suggestions, and the discussion of experiences and problems.
- Do seat the worshippers where they want to sit as much as possible.
- Don't let the untrained and those who have not been properly instructed to usher.
- Don't regard ushering in church as a mere mechanical necessity to direct people to their pews or a social function that church custom considers desirable.

For more Do's and Don'ts of ushering, visit the following websites:

- ministrymagazine.org
- [Church Usher Training: Ushering As Part Of A Larger Experience](#)

Security Teams

Security teams have become a vital part of the church structure in recent years. Security teams don't simply watch for dangerous situations. They oversee medical emergencies, disorderly conduct or service interruptions, and parking lot issues.

15 Church Security Tips and Resources for Pastors and Church Boards

1. Create a church security plan.
2. Install video surveillance (inside and outside).
3. Never allow an adult in the children's area without proper identification.
4. Make sure to have a plan for Sunday services in the event of a shooter, fire, or other incident.
5. Ask a local police officer to do a walk-through of your facilities and to offer feedback.
6. Ensure emergency lights are installed and tested around the entire campus.
7. Train all your leaders on how to respond to emergency situations.
8. Define an official spokesperson for the church.
9. Create public and private wireless networks that use different routers.
10. Design someone "official" to patrol the parking lot regularly.
11. Don't allow staff or volunteer leaders to work alone in the church building.
12. Test your security systems and your security routines annually, at the very least.
13. Create a clear protocol for handling money (make sure people handle money in groups and not alone).
14. Get to know your local police, fire department, and paramedics.
15. Never assume everything is fine and doing well.