

**DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS**

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Archdeacon Bob Barrett

# **Leading Visitor Friendly Worship**

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**Exploring the worship services we lead  
from the viewpoint of the worshipper,  
so we lead in a way that helps others worship  
and inspires their Christian life.**

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DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS Number 1

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## Leading Visitor Friendly Worship

Exploring the worship services from the viewpoint of the worshipper, so we lead in a way that helps others to worship and inspires their Christian life.

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*This series of Booklets provide practical ideas to help leaders develop their skills in a variety of ministry areas. Experimenting with them, growing your own ideas, discussion with ministry teams will help both you and others grow in skill. Good modelling, evaluation and training will inspire worshippers to worship, pray and grow in their Christian life and ministry.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE PURPOSE

This booklet helps us look at the services we lead from the worshippers' view point, so that we can lead each service in a way that helps others in their worship of our Lord Jesus Christ and inspires their Christian Life and Growth.

There are two main worshipping groups to be aware of:

- the regular worshipper. *What will help them worship?*
- the visitor or recent newcomer. *What can we do to help them feel relaxed, 'at home' and able to be included in our worship at whatever level they currently feel able to participate?*

## WORSHIP IS THE 'SHOP FRONT' OF OUR FAITH

It is the place where people view worship and see something of the God who inspires it. Newcomers at worship are often taking a look at Christ and Christianity - to find if the product is worth 'buying'. Their decision is affected by us - as leaders and worshippers. The Living Christ we portray and the worship we inspire will be used by the Lord to draw people to Himself. We certainly do not want our worship to repel people away from Christ.

### 'VISITOR FRIENDLY' MEANS . . .

Sales people sometimes describe computers as 'user friendly' - meaning it is easy to use, instructions are simple to follow, you will feel comfortable and not get frustrated.

The same can be said of worship - it should be 'user friendly'. Many regular users of worship find worship 'friendly' - they know their way around it, they like it. **Being user friendly alone is not enough.**

A church which seeks to be evangelistic expects newcomers – both the not yet Christian and the “once were worshippers”. Our worship therefore needs to be **more than 'regular-worship-user-friendly'** - it needs to be **'visitor friendly'** to the "lapsed returnee" and to the "never been to church before" person.

While being Seeker Sensitive-Visitor Friendly, such worship is not Seeker Driven; the seeker does not drive the content and flow.

Visitor friendly will affect everything about the service - from the moment they walk towards the buildings (and even in their imagination before that) to the time they leave for home (and in their memories beyond that).

'Visitor friendly worship' is led in such a way that worshippers feel wanted, welcomed and relaxed; they are helped to sense the reality of the Living God; they are drawn into worship (by doing things at a level they feel comfortable with); they find others relating to them in a non-threatening manner; and they want to come back and experience more.

### AN EXERCISE

*List what for you are some of the things which make a service 'friendly' and easy to participate in - or make it difficult to worship in.*

*Ask yourself "what makes me feel as if I am wanted, welcomed, more relaxed, allowed to be there and encouraged into a worshipful attitude? What reduces those things?"*

**Positives - making it 'friendly'**

**Negatives - making it 'unfriendly'**



Repeat this exercise – this time listing things that a newcomer might experience and feel.

## A BIBLICAL REFLECTION

1 Corinthians 14 shows Paul's feelings for the range of people who may gather for a time for worship.

Paul expects:

- the 'believers' to gather - the 'you' of the chapter.
- the 'unbelievers' (v23) may attend. Paul writes as if it is normal for unbelievers to be present.
- v23 and 24 imply that Paul may have also expected another group to be present - 'the inquirers' - (see NIV footnote).

Paul is concerned for these second two groups. Gordon Miller (World Vision Christian Leadership Letter No 133) writes:

*"So look," Paul seems to say in this Chapter, "don't do anything crazy in church, because there may be a couple of groups of people there who won't be able to handle it - and you should keep their needs in mind when you are running your church services."*

### PAUL'S CONCERN SHOULD BE OUR CONCERN.

We too should want our **regular weekly services to be as 'visitor friendly' as possible.** Nothing should be done which pushes the unbeliever away from Christ.

Paul's example of danger areas are tongues and interpretation. Today we need to consider any aspect of our worship which could push people away from Christ.

*What possible 'pushing away' things can you think of?*

*Perhaps your list includes such things as:*

*The way we use the Prayer Book, Sermon, Music, Length, Jargon, Environment, Leadership styles.*

### READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14, ESPECIALLY v23-25.

- *Do we pray for the expectations of v25 to happen in our midst?*
- *How are we going to respond to the comments Paul makes which don't seem to apply today?*

**IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH, especially the Worship Leaders to make public worship services visitor friendly.**

It is **not** the responsibility of the visitor.

*"Paul does not think any part of the service is so important that it is worth sending an unbeliever to hell over". Dr Robert Orr*

*How do you feel about the above comments?*

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# KNOW WHO IS IN THE CONGREGATION

## AS LEADERS OF WORSHIP WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE PEOPLE IN THE CONGREGATION.

- their back ground
- their personal situation
- their needs
- their hopes

## THEY ARE FROM A VARIETY OF BACKGROUNDS.

On any one occasion we could be leading worship for:

- regular worshippers and long term Christians.
- new Christians.
- seekers, enquirers, interested people (from a non Christian background or who came a few years ago and are beginning to return).
- church shoppers (looking to "buy" into a church).
  - new to the community.
  - from another church.
  - or nomadic Christians.
- those thinking of joining (looking for the first or fourth time to see if the Lord, this church and its programme can fit their family needs and will allow them to get involved).
- those attending against their will - e.g. for a baptism.
- visitors on holiday, or coming to observe
- people who know others, those who know no one.
- the fringe person who wants to remain fringe.
- young and old; children to adults; babies to elderly.
- involved participants and on looking spectators (who can be 'shown' the joy of the Lord, the presence of God and the positive side of being a Christian).
- the know all's and the know nothings.
- the feeling good, & the worried, depressed or needy.
- quiet reflective and demonstrative outgoing persons.

## THEY WILL BE THE PEOPLE OF 'TODAY'.

'Today' in that many will **not be of the past**.

- at least not of the past if our church is involving new people under the 40 (or 50) years of age.

'Today' in the sense of this **Media TV and Internet consumer generation**.

- The Media generation has raised people's expectations of quality. A visitor friendly service will aim to do everything very well.
- The Media generation has reduced most people's attention span to less than 10 minutes. A visitor friendly service may break the service into chunks of no longer than 10 minutes (sermons over 10 minutes taking this into account in structure, delivery and keeping awake techniques).
- The consumer society - which says people will 'shop' elsewhere if they do not like the way the product is 'dished up' here.
- Today's generation has different attitudes to tradition, to the church, to authority, to robes, to music, to expressing itself, to commitment, to . . . . .

'Today' in the sense of the fact that they are here today but may not have been here last week or last year.

- a visitor friendly service ensures each service is an entity in itself without requiring people to have shared in the 'experience' previously.
- Reflect on why people do not (sometimes 'cannot') worship every week

'Today' in the sense that they are at the service.

- so it will be for them and others like them who could come when they hear how suitable it was for people like them.

## THEY BRING THEIR 'BAGGAGE', NEEDS & HOPES.

Each of the groups listed above have their own requirements.

They arrive with a week behind them

- affected by job, family, relationships, health, and events.
- possibly feeling the weight of busyness and responsibility
  - (so worship must be worthwhile).

They arrive with feelings and thoughts

- this is the way I feel now . . .
- these are the thoughts on my mind . . .

They will leave with a week ahead of them.

- anticipating job, family, relationships, health, events.

Visitor friendly worship knows where people are 'at'. It locates itself in the midst of real life situations and ministers to people in their life struggles - AND in their hopes and joys.

<i>When your congregations gather, what feelings do they arrive with? What are some of the certainties, uncertainties, joys, sorrows, worries and . . . ?</i>
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## **THEY MAY NOT WORSHIP TOGETHER EASILY.**

Different expectations are created by personality, music tastes, traditional expectations, desires for change, background experience, previous church connections, the way they express themselves . . . . . and the issues we are exploring in this section.

No one style is right or wrong.

It will be what suits a particular group of people.

Your 'target group' will determine your style. Know the hopes and dreams they have. Structure and lead the service accordingly - see below. *If an astute visitor observed your service would they, (from its style), identify your target group?*

## **THEY ARE NOT AS PREPARED AS THE LEADER.**

Their preparation has been interfered with by the exercise of getting there: visitors, children, meals, phone . . .

They come 'cold' - unaware of the theme, issues and 'activity' they will be 'put through'.

Their minds may be on other things and not the Lord.

## **THEY MAY BE "LOOKING FOR SOMETHING".**

They may or may not know what they are looking for.

I suggest they may be looking for:

R<sub>1</sub> = REALITY = a place that is real, with real people, who allow them to come as they really are.

R<sub>2</sub> = REJOICE = an opportunity to express the joy of the Lord and of being together.

R<sub>3</sub> = RECEIVE = A chance to find encouragement, to be 'fed', to hear a message, to find a friend.

R<sub>4</sub> = REFRESH = adding a new freshness to their faith, trust in the Lord and willingness to serve.

R<sub>5</sub> = RENEW = finding a way to express a renewed commitment and be strengthened by a renewed empowering.

They will need to be touched in the areas of their:

- minds and thoughts
- heart, emotions and feelings
- desires and willingness

## THEY WILL HAVE THEIR OWN EXPECTATIONS

### - DEPENDING ON WHICH GROUP THEY BELONG TO:

The **regular worshipper's** expectations include:

- wanting things as they usually are
- wanting good teaching
- wanting friendship
- wanting security
- wanting good music

The **newcomer's expectations** include:

- a desire that the church will understand them - their uncertainties, shyness, nervousness, fears and trepidation's.
- a desire to be put at ease in this new environment. *"What will they do to me?"*
- a desire to know what they are supposed to do, what to say and where to find 'it'.
- a desire not to be humiliated or embarrassed by having to do something they don't want to do.
- a desire to be anonymous (except the extrovert visiting Christian) and not to have too much attention given to them. (There is a fine line between a warm welcome and an uncomfortable over welcome). *"Let me hide in the woodwork and not be cornered"*.
- a desire to find something extra in life, with a willingness to give the church a chance to provide it (perhaps giving the church only one chance).
- a desire for friendship, a home, help with problems, with their marriage, kids, job, relationships, health.

## THEY WILL LOOK TO YOU AS LEADERS.

- to put them at ease.
- to help them through the service.

Visitor friendly worship has leaders who are sensitive to the worshippers and keep in mind the above issues. Such leaders 'feel with' the newcomer.

**As leaders we** do such things as:

- know where the worshippers are 'coming from'.
- link the service to their life, struggles and hopes.
- build a sense of expectancy.
- give a sense of welcome.
- enable wholehearted participation.
- help all types of people focus on the Lord.
- let the Lord communicate His presence.

Worshippers may want leaders **to give them 'space'**:

- to relax and take a break from a hectic schedule.
- to be quiet – hence the importance of silence (see Booklet 3).
- to lift a burden.
- to provide challenge or encouragement.
- to convey inspiration for the week.

**AS A LEADER AND/OR AS A REGULAR WORSHIPPER DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT STATEMENT?**

Overall we are responsible for visitor friendly worship!

## **SOME QUOTES TO PONDER**

(from Robert Orr, Jack Hayford and others).

*"If it is a choice between drawing the unbeliever to Christ or for Christians to feel comfortable - I choose the first." Jack Hayford*

*"Church is a place for non Christians and therefore it is a place for visitors; therefore we expect visitors at every service; and therefore we consider how they will fit in."*

*"If it is true worship it will draw the unbeliever to Christ. If it is an experience only Christians can share in, it is an aberration of true worship". Robert Orr.*

*"We have no right to bore people or to be irrelevant".*

*"People do not come to waste their time".*

*"There will be more visitors in the church service than all the other Church activities combined."*

*"The New Testament and those holding Eastern, African, Asian attitudes see that worship is for visitors - only the Western world has the view that worship is for Christians only".*

### **Discuss these quotes**

1. Share what do you understand them to mean and why you agree or disagree with them.
2. What are the implications of each quote for the worship provided in your church?

# ASSISTING VISITOR FRIENDLY WORSHIP

## SURROUNDINGS WHICH ATTRACT AND PUT PEOPLE AT EASE

- While some of these things are not the direct responsibility of the worship leader, nevertheless as members of the parish, we can be encouraging vestry to play their part in providing a visitor friendly environment.

**Grounds** - pleasant, lawns mowed, garden.

**Street Notice board** – clean, fresh, conveying a sense of life, attractive, welcoming and with correct up to date information.

**Buildings** - painted, clean, tidy, uncluttered.

**Visualness** - banners, colour scheme, uncluttered, hymn numbers etc appropriate to the service (especially important for visually oriented people).

**Signs** - so people can find their way into the building and then to toilet, crèche, Children's programme, morning tea.

**Seating** that is comfortable! People need space, they do not want to be squashed into pews with people they do not know well (a problem for growing congregations and those with small worship centres). Yet - too few people in Church makes the newcomer feel conspicuous (a problem for rural churches and small congregations).

**Space** at the back of the church for young children, prams plus providing room to talk and mingle.

**Information** - newsletter and newcomers leaflet to let visitors know the range of activities and whether this 'church family' might suit my family's needs. The news notice board assists with up-to-date easy to follow information - and a way to find 'this week's new notices'.

**Light** (the easiest way to uplift the feelings of the people is to increase the size of the light bulbs) and spot lights making up front people easy to see.

**Warmth and fresh air** - in the appropriate balance. Visitors will not return to cold or stuffy buildings.

**Words on the screen** should be clear and large enough to be easily seen from the back. Lower case is generally easier to read than capitals.

***Everything says 'I am wanted here. This is an attractive place to visit, the church is up-to-date and a comfortable place to be in.'***

## PEOPLE WHO PUT VISITORS AT EASE

**Greeters** - Welcomers who with a smile and a warm, gentle, non threatening welcome put visitors at ease, explaining what is happening and showing (taking) them where they need to go.

- The visitor is spoken to afterwards, given a newsletter, taken to morning tea, invited back.
- Details passed to the Vicar or follow up person.

**Leaders** and other involved people are ready - no obvious sense of rush or last minute preparation.

**Parishioners** smile, show their friendliness and acceptance; make space; relate to but not overwhelm visitors; and become friends to some of the visitors.

**All Members** (including Vicar and leaders) show positive attitudes to God, the Church, the Vicar, each other, worship, the past and the future.

## **CONTENT WHICH ATTRACTS & PUTS PEOPLE AT EASE**

**Appropriate** content takes into account:

- the length of time available.
- the theme: "the service is the message" (See Booklet 2: "Leading Worship - Who is it for?")
- today's worship journey.

**Visitor friendly avoids**

- too much content
- too much variety
- too much 'sameness'
- too many themes and focuses
- too much yo-yo (up and down - stand/sit/kneel)
- too much unnecessary repetition

**Length** is important for visitors

- it is said that anything over 1 hour 20 minutes will put off newcomers from returning (and may put regulars off too!)
- mixing and fellowship time after the service is also important. If the service is too long people won't stay.
  - *how long can people concentrate?*
  - *how much time can they 'give' to a worship service in a busy week?*

**Children** are acknowledged in visitor friendly services. Some content (children's talk, song) may help. Also there is a need to allow children to do things suitable to their age group (crèche, Sunday School, activity sheets). Many young families are attracted to a church which has a lively crèche, children's programmes and activities for youth - although some families are more interested in all age worship.

**Adults** want to be taught, 'fed' and encouraged to pray at their level.

**Easy to follow content** is more visitor friendly.

- service sheets and Multimedia projector **can** help if used correctly.
- people should not have to look at too many things. Avoid moving backwards and forwards in the Prayer Book
- people can find it confusing if they are expected to follow elements of the service on the newsheet, AND the book AND the card. Stick to one (e.g. avoid reading the Collect on the newsletter).
- people like to follow the overall theme, purpose and elements of today's worship journey.

**Music** is visitor friendly when it is:

- easy to sing (tune and tempo)
- given a good lead by a clear easy to hear singer
- backed by a competent spiritually sensitive musician
- the first hymn or song and the last are well known - to set the scene, encourage involvement and send people out in a positive frame of mind

**Language** is critical for visitor friendly worship.

- words, phrases, thought forms should not require too much 'technical-in house-Christian knowledge'.
- it should be 'common' language to people from a variety of backgrounds present. For example the Good News Bible and some other more modern versions, are translated in common English - words common to a wide variety of people - including the lesser and those more fully educated.
- inclusive to male-female genders, to regular attender and outsider; to educated and non educated; to the person who knows a lot about Christianity and to the person who knows nothing.

**The Beginning** is critical to put people at ease.

- people often decide in the first five minutes whether or not they will return.
- a brief time to greet each other sets people at ease but over 15 seconds becomes less visitor friendly. The leader and musicians should stay at the front, ready to continue the service. The leader should not get caught up talking with others.

**The 'so what' question** should be raised and answered. *So what does this mean? So what do I do with it, how?* It is vitally important to build a response into the worship journey.

**Apportioning time** to various elements is important so that one area is not missed or rushed.

- The right timing for children to be present is important
- Silence, prayer, Communion, should have enough time for their place in the worship journey and not be squashed out by an over long beginning or a lengthy sermon.
- Plan the elements and the timing. Ensure all contributors know the time apportioned to them and the negative impact using too much time will have on the rest of the service.

**Prayers** need to be handled sensitively to not embarrass visitors.

- Small Groups in a church service for sharing or praying can threaten some visitors AND many regulars. Those threatened will avoid returning!

**Consistency** in style and quality is visitor friendly.

- the same style at the same time each week (using creatively within that style) is good, but this is difficult in smaller rural centres.

**The visitor** is likely to be looking for a sense of the Almighty and the spiritual dimension. Visitor friendly content allows God to be present and at work. See Booklet 2: "Leading Worship - Who is it for?"

**Key words** for those who plan worship include: followable, welcoming, understandable, meaningful, relevant, not embarrassing, worthwhile, encouraging, uplifting.

**Overall** - every element of content should:

- fit the target group(s).
- be essential for the purpose and message of the service.
- be done well.

## **LEADERSHIP TECHNIQUES WHICH ATTRACT AND PUT PEOPLE AT EASE**

**Dress** to put people at ease - yet show you respect the leadership role. An approximate rule of thumb is to dress slightly above the expected average dress of the target group.

**Prepare** so you know exactly what is to happen, when, with whom. Check that readers etc will know when to come forward. Aim to lead well - as best you can for the glory of God.

**Physical position** is important - where the leader can:

- be seen - stand rather than kneel.
- be heard (volume is critical - too soft strains, too loud interferes).
- be regarded as 'in control' - in a way that gives security to people, but does not 'squash' them.
- be able to see and 'read' the congregation.

**Be relaxed.** Try to overcome nervous mannerisms (e.g. fiddling with the notes or book).

**Attitudes** of warmth, welcome, feeling for the people and openness to the Lord all inspires visitor friendly worship. Be gently positive and enthusiastic. Let the voice convey a sense of life.

You can make everyone feel special through eye contact. There is no need to 'hype' people up or move to emotionalism.

**Instructions** for visitor friendly service are critical. Do not assume people will know what you are about to do.

- too few and the visitor cannot follow
- too many and they interfere and dominate worship

Convey the **sense** of '**we are doing this together**'.

- avoid the schoolmaster telling and the detached approach. Avoid 'sit' or 'please sit' rather '*let's sit as we hear the Bible read*'. Not 'stand' nor 'would you stand', rather '*let's stand for the . . .*' *Do we need to ask people to stand to sing?*
- The impression is we are doing this together - even if you as leader are not going to kneel.

**Options** are important so that people are not embarrassed and do not feel compelled to do something they are uncomfortable with e.g. '*let's sit or kneel for a time of prayer*'. Avoid a sense of 'must' - e.g. Do not say '*in this song we all raise our hands*' - rather **if** something needs to be said, be more gentle and inclusive with '*some may like to follow the suggestions of the words and raise their hands*'.

**Make sense** - e.g. after an initial time of singing don't say '*let's begin our service with a prayer*' (it has already begun!).

Initially say something designed to put people at **ease**, e.g.

- '*welcome everyone, and a special welcome to visitors - it is great to have you with us . . .*' This also let's visitors know they are 'allowed' to be there.

**Page** numbers can be incorporated into instructions - e.g. '*as we come to a time of confession let's turn to page . . . and sit or kneel.*' This can help prevent page numbers dominating. Give the movement ('sit or kneel' instruction last as once people are moving they miss any other words.

**Observe** closely what is happening - and adjust your leadership accordingly.

Earth all aspects of the service **into the lives** of the people - linking to their needs, hopes, struggles, joys - and linking these to the Lord's presence.

**Explain** certain things - e.g. silence (Booklet 3: "Leading Worship - the Prayers"); anything unusual that happens - so visitors are not threatened or worried (e.g. 'a Tongue', prophecy, resting in the Spirit, manifestations, an obvious hiccup in the service . . .).

At the beginning explaining what may happen in the service can help - but people do not need to know every detail, perhaps just very briefly the theme and general flow.

An explanation is useful if things are to be done differently from normal.

Avoid

- in house jokes
- making side comments to people
- making comments or jokes only some people can hear
- long notices (they should take less than 1 minute; do not 'read the newsletter' to the people)

We are leading **corporate worship**

- not the leader doing 'their thing'.
- not the leader pushing people to something they do not feel comfortable with.
- not the leader rushing on through a service that must be completed.
- leaders are responsible to help people be open to the Living God; to allow the Spirit to do what the Spirit wants to; and provide opportunity for the people to listen, to praise and to pray.

## PRAYER THAT PUTS PEOPLE AT EASE

To receive answers to prayer we should encourage the pray-er to **listen** to the Lord's leading in prayer and then to pray specific prayers.

Prayers **before** the service can include:

- praying that people will sense the presence and reality of our Lord - before a word is spoken, a song is sung . . .
- pray that people will have a need and reach out to the church (including worship) to have that need met
- pray that people will find the right person to talk to, sit next to
- pray that the people of the church will know what to 'say'
- pray that worship leaders and planners will be guided by the Spirit in preparation and in leading
- pray that the Holy Spirit will meet and minister to people - and the people will be aware of the Spirit's work

Prayer **during** the service. A number of ideas are suggested in the booklet 3: 'Leading Worship - the Prayers'.

Remember to:

- be relevant
- be sensitively led
- be specific and reasonably detailed
- avoid shopping lists
- include silence
- involve the congregation in prayer
  - (some praying out loud, and all praying silently)

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## OBTAINING FEEDBACK - SO THAT WE CAN BE MORE VISITOR FRIENDLY

WE CAN ASSIST OUR OWN **EVALUATION** AND GROWTH AS LEADERS BY USING A NUMBER OF SOURCES.

- observing the leadership styles and techniques of others.
- listening to
  - the comments of others
  - the regular worshipper
  - the visitor.
- evaluating each service with other leaders - exploring what worked and didn't work; what might have been better placed elsewhere; what could have been added, deleted, lengthened, shortened.
- learning from books, courses and others with more (or less) experience.
- asking for suggestions, comments and ideas.

See Booklet 2: 'Worship – Who is it for?' for a simple Evaluation Exercise.

## WE ALSO NEED **FEEDBACK** DURING THE SERVICE

- some prearranged - e.g. signs from someone at the back regarding how well they can hear.
- occasionally guidance from the leaders regarding what to do with prophecy, words and tricky situations.
- always observing the worshippers.

## HINTS FOR '**READING THE CONGREGATION**'.

Keep your **eyes open**

- watching as you give instructions (have they understood?)
- observing during prayer (have they had enough time for silence . . . ?)

**Look at** the whole congregation - while noting particularly people who give obvious feedback (intentionally or unintentionally).

Watch for signs of disinterest or 'had enough'.

- fidgeting
- talking to people next to them
- looking at their watch - constantly

Take particular notice of the Vicar or overseer of the service - are they trying to convey something to us.

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## **GUEST SERVICES AND SEEKER SENSITIVE SERVICES** **SPECIAL TYPES OF VISITOR FRIENDLY SERVICES.**

A **guest service** is an occasional service specifically designed for regulars to invite friends, fringe people, never attended . . .

A **seeker** service is a regular service geared primarily to the visitor, allowing for less participation (than in an ordinary service) and more observation (recognising visitors often want to be spectators).

Generally in many parts of New Zealand do not have the population draw to run weekly seeker sensitive services - but we can run weekly visitor friendly services.

A **GUEST SERVICE** DEVELOPS THE VISITOR FRIENDLY SERVICE METHODS WITH SOME SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS AND ADDITIONS

It uses special advertising and invitations.

It allows for more observation than participation.

The elements are usually shorter (e.g. shorter sermon, shorter service).

The leader is specifically focused on the visitors by words, attitudes and instruction.

Items are included - e.g. a group or individual singing.

More use is made of the visual - e.g. dance or drama.

The theme and sermon focus on life realities of non Christians (many of which apply to Christians as well).

An invitation can be given - not usually to receive Christ. It acknowledges the reality of process evangelism - it sees the guest service as one step in the process of drawing people to Christ.

The invitation can include offering opportunities for people to ask:

- for a Gospel and New Testament
- for a book about Jesus
- to join a group to answer questions (apologetic) or learn more about Jesus (enquiries class)
- to talk to someone - then or to receive a visit later
- to be prayed for/with (any need - physical, relationship...)

**Note:**

- when we begin guest services regulars will not usually bring guests - they will watch a few services to see if the style and quality really will be okay to invite others
- those invited will not usually come on the first occasion - but may do so on future occasions
- visitors often feel it is safe to come to a guest service - "because the 'club' has an open door meeting today and I won't be the only guest".

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## **SOME POLICY DECISIONS**

When **planning** visitor friendly services our parish will need to explore and decide appropriate ways to handle some of the elements that the people in our community may have difficulty coping with.

Raising any of the issues below does not mean 'don't use'. Rather it means if we choose to use or allow these things to happen we will need to look for visitor friendly ways to use and lead them.

Some issues you may need to discuss include:

- the length and beginning time of the service
- the right way to use the Prayer Book for each particular target group
- the style of the music
- singing in the Spirit
- Tongues and interpretation
- the use of silence
- which leaders have the right leadership skills for all or part of the service (e.g. the prayers etc) for this target group and this particular style of service.
- ways to streamline the flow of the service
- sermon style and length
- robes
- terminology (Eucharist, Morning Prayer etc)

# ANALYSE YOUR CHURCH - SOME EXERCISES

Look again at your answers to the exercise in the introduction

## Discuss

- *why do people visit our church?*
- *what encourages them to come?*
- *what encourages them to come back?*
- *what discourages people from coming back?*

## Identify

- *what kind of God do they see in our worship?*
- *how do we presently go about introducing visitors to our Lord Jesus Christ?*

## Profile

- *How would you describe the average person in your community who may possibly be encouraged to visit your worship service?*

Note some aspects of the profile may appear contradictory but are necessary to list as you draw up a full picture as e.g. married/single, working/unemployed.

- *Explore their likes and dislikes; fears and hopes; family situations and needs; attitudes to life; church, Christ and Christianity; experiences and tastes*

## The service

- *What is the best style of service to have for each of our target groups?*
- *What are essential elements for our visitor friendly services?*
- *What should we omit, add or alter?*

## Leadership

- *As I look at my style of leadership where do I need to alter my techniques so that the services I lead are very visitor friendly?*
  - *Are my skills and tastes such that I should be leading a different style of service?*
  - *Is there some training I should endeavour to obtain or some books I should read?*
  - *Who can I discuss by leadership with? Who can I go to help with the evaluation of my leadership techniques?*
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## CONCLUSION

The Lord will begin to bring more visitors when we are providing appropriate worship for them, and when we are ready to receive visitors.

The members will begin to encourage others to attend when the members know they themselves will feel comfortable having their visitor experience our worship.

As you journey together in developing visitor friendly services you will be pleasantly surprised about the way the Lord will lead you and the impact such services will have on others.

### ***THE LORD WILL BLESS YOUR JOURNEY!***

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#### **TITLES IN THE SERIES:**

- Number 1 "Visitor Friendly Worship"
- Number 2 "Worship - Who is it for?" – 2001 edition.
- Number 3 "Leading Worship - The Prayers"
- Number 4 "People Helping Skills"
- Number 5 "Preaching and Teaching"
- Number 6 "Stewardship - The Financial Area"
- Number 8 "Healing - Prayer Ministry"
- Number 9 "Informal Worship - Designing and Leading"
- Number 10 "Incorporation - Helping Newcomers Into Membership"
- Number 11 "Change - Introduce New Things Successfully"
- Number 12 "Youth Ministry For the 21st Century"
- Number 13 "Handling Hurts in the Church"
- Number 14 "Managing Conflict in the Church"
- Number 15 "Every Member Ministry – Making It Work"
- Number 16 "Criticism – How Do We Respond?"

Please note that Number 7 on Planning is not available in the Electronic Series.

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