

INVITING PEOPLE TO AN EVENT

Opportunity Knocks

There are likely to be a wide variety of opportunities through the year where we can invite people we know to join us at an event – a Christmas carol service, a church quiz night, a men's breakfast, a bonfire party, an Alpha course and so on. These are events where the format and content are appropriate for guests to come along.

Some will be purely social (a church quiz night), others may contain a talk of some sort (a women's lunch), and yet others will be a well known format with certain expectations (a Christingle service).

At one level inviting people to such events couldn't be simpler. Ask someone along just as you would ask them to go to the cinema with you.

At another level, there may be an additional layer to inviting someone to a 'church-run' event. Perhaps you aren't clear if it is the right thing to invite them to; perhaps you are unsure whether they will enjoy it; or perhaps you feel anxious about how they might respond.

The invitation to an event organised by your church may be appropriate within a few minutes of meeting a person, or not for many months. It is vital to be open to God's leading and to a healthy dose of good common sense as to what is appropriate when. Here are some things that might help you as you look to make the most of the opportunities that services, events and courses provide.

It All Begins with Prayer

Perhaps you are already [Praying for Five](#) people you know who aren't yet Christians, and you've spotted an opportunity to invite one of them along. Or maybe you are aware of a great opportunity to invite someone to an event designed for those outside of the life of the church. Either way, it helps to pray for:

- Opportunities to come along to make the invitation.
- Eyes to see them.
- Courage to take them.
- Wisdom to know what to say.

Be Clear

Make sure you know what sort of event it is, how long it will last, and who will be going. Then when you offer the invitation you can be clear about what you are asking them to. For example, it is important that no one is brought along to an event with some Christian input thinking that they are attending a purely social event.

Be Positive

Suggest the event will be good. Apologising for the event is bound to undermine the person's desire to attend. There are three things most people are concerned about when invited to an event.

- They are worried they will be the odd one out.
- They are worried about being asked to do something publicly.
- They are concerned whether there are any strings attached.

The more we can do to alleviate their concerns the better. Some people may be wary of anything that is associated with church; a smile and a positive invite will go a long way in helping them overcome their natural reticence.

Be Practical

It can help to have an invitation card with all the relevant details to give them, and even if your church hasn't created one, you could always write the basic details on a bit of paper, or offer to text them. This gives them time to ponder if they would like to come. If they accept the invitation, offer them a lift, or arrange to meet them outside the venue. Walking into a strange place on your own is no fun.

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Be Personal

The ideal way to offer an invitation is face-to-face. Pushing an invite through a door rarely works. It may be more daunting to speak personally with someone, but it is much more warm and friendly.

WHAT TO SAY IF YOU'RE STUCK

- 'We've got a quiz night organised by our church and I am putting together a team. I'd love you to join us. There's a fish and chip supper included as well, and it should be a fun night.'
- 'There's a group of us, all men, who meet at The Red Lion once in a while to listen to a speaker and have a pint or two. Next Tuesday we're looking at 'Success in the Modern World'. It sounds as though the speaker will be very good, would you like to come with me?'
- 'As part of a weekend of special events organised by our Church I've asked some people round to listen to a talk on what Christians believe. There will be an opportunity for questions and something to eat. Would you like to come?'
- 'You know we were talking about suffering the other day, well we've got an event arranged by the church I go to called 'Suffering – Why?' It sounds as though it is going to be really good, would you like to come with me?'

HANDLING THE RESPONSE

- If no, don't give up. There are often good reasons. No may mean not yet, or I can't because I've got something else on, or be an instinctive reaction which they later regret. Beware of making it into a big issue that they can't come. Ideally we should be able to invite them to a church event in the same way we would invite them to the cinema or the pub. Say 'no problems' and look for the next opportunity to invite them to something appropriate.
- If 'maybe'. It probably means they won't come. Follow it up a few days later with a 'Just checking whether you would like to join me...'
- If 'yes', do all you can to make it easy for them to attend.

At the Event

The invite is simply the start. Be sure to be a good friend as they come along to the event.

- Do pray beforehand.
- Do offer to take/meet outside.
- Don't neglect them for your Christian friends.
- Don't talk about others while they are there.
- Do introduce them to one or two people.
- Do ask them an appropriate question afterwards.

FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE EVENT

- When you next see them, or a few days later, thank them for coming along. If it was a social event ask them if they would like to be invited along to a similar event in the future. If it was an event with some Christian content, ask them what they thought and be ready with a next question that you might ask to open up a conversation (see our guide on [getting started](#) for some ideas).
- Think about what might be the next step for them on their journey to faith. Is there a future event, course, service it would be good to invite them to. Is there a book, video, podcast you could share with them that might be of interest? Would meeting with them for a chat be helpful?
- Continue to pray.

And Finally...

Be yourself in all of this. Your words and your way of doing this will be just fine. And be encouraged. Most people's journey to faith starts with small steps, and the invite you issue could be just the right thing for the person you care about.

