



COLLABORATIVE DISCIPLESHIP

2 Cultivate

How to Invite and Welcome

1 Connect

Summary God made us for community. We're all looking for sincere friends and a group where we feel wanted and where we belong. Many of those outside the body of Christ will need to know they belong before they believe. The art of inviting and welcoming outsiders into our groups is a critically important skill. Becoming people who are good at welcoming and inviting others will take practice and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Our actions and attitudes make a huge difference.

Authentic and loving communities that draw people to Christ rely on God's power to change lives. Those in these communities don't put on invisible masks or pretend. Whether your community goes out of the way to be around those who don't yet know God, or outsiders come into your community, you can be a community that effectively demonstrates the love of Christ.

Read Philippians 2:1–5.

“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.” (New International Version)

Discuss

What qualities are important in order for outsiders to trust and want to be around believers?

How is it possible to become people with these qualities?

There are practical things you can do to invite others.

Be honest about what you're inviting others to.

- Don't ask others what they are doing at a specific time or day. This feels manipulative. Just invite them to your event.
- Be up front about the location, time and what will happen there.
- If they can't go this time, tell them you'll invite them to a future event. Say something like, “I'll let you know the next time we play paintball.”

Put the responsibility of communication and follow up on yourself.

- Show you care by being proactive rather than passive.
- Don't say, “If you're interested let me know.” Instead say, “If you give me your cell number, I'll text you when we're getting together.”

How did you first get connected with a group where you felt welcomed and safe?

3 Care

Since we last met, what happened as a result of expressing Christ's love to others?

*How can you, or we, express Christ's love to others this week by **inviting** them to do something fun or meaningful?*

*Seek to **welcome** at least one stranger to any event you happen to attend this week.*

Communicate your desires and experience authentically.

- Say something like, “I think it would be great if you came to our Bible study. The people are fun and it has helped me in getting past some anxieties in my life.”

Discuss

Why is it important to God that you desire to give him control of your life?

What are the results of cherishing sin?

Brainstorm If you were someone who wasn’t connected to a Christian ministry or church, how would you want to be invited? Brainstorm a list of ways you’d like to be invited.

Roleplay Pair up and have each person take a turn inviting their partner to church.

There are practical things you can do to welcome others.

Ask good questions that help others feel cared for, included, and known.

- How did you hear about our campus ministry?
- Is this your first time here?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- What was the best part of your day today?
- What are you passionate about?
- Tell me a bit about your family. How do you and your siblings get along?
- What are your favorite books or movies?

Listen well. After someone answers your question, ask a follow up question instead of talking about yourself. Say, “That’s interesting. Tell me more about that.”

Remember names.

- Think about a famous person or someone you know who shares their first name.
- After the conversation, make a note in your phone with their name and other pertinent information.

Get them connected.

- Friend them on Facebook or follow them on other social media.
- Exchange cell numbers so you can text them about other things the group does.
- Invite them to hangout and do something fun, like watch a movie or play games.
- Introduce them to others in your group who have similar interests, live near them, or have the same major.

Discuss

What would you add to this list?

Do you know someone who is really good at making people feel welcome? What do they do? If you don’t know, find out.

Roleplay Take some time to role play welcoming each other to your Christian group.

Pray In light of what we’ve discussed, how can we pray for each other right now?