

Get Your Own Thing
Paper No. OCCG-026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: A congregation can distinguish itself in the eyes of the community by being known for doing a specific “good work”. The reputation and repeated contact with prospects can support your personal evangelism program.

KEY WORDS:

Side Door Event

GLOSSARY:

Side Door Event: A non-religious event which repeatedly brings lost prospects into contact with members.

Thing: A focus, theme, or activity you are recognized for doing.

REPORT:

In another paper on the www.occg.institute website titled OCCG-008 NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY, the suggestion is made to interview some residents in your neighborhood and see what they think about you. In the case of one large congregation, the random neighbors thought the church was either a funeral home or a Methodist church.

There are many ways to do your part of the Great Commission, but a positive neighborhood awareness should help on any of them. When someone might be open to finding the Lord, it cannot hurt if your name comes to mind at that



time. If there is a time when they are receptive to the Gospel and they can only think of a denomination down the street, it is an opportunity lost.

This paper is suggesting that if you promote a positive neighborhood awareness of your congregation at all times, it can be a beneficial part of your personal evangelism program.

This process will vary considerably from a small congregation to a large one, but the ideas would be the same. For simplicity, we will discuss a small congregation. Our small congregations are characteristically struggling and on the average are declining in attendance. Most available time is consumed in Sunday morning and evening worship services and Sunday morning and Wednesday evening Bible Classes.

These are good activities, but as a practical matter it is likely that the Sunday morning worship service satisfies our scriptural mandate. Consider that we specifically devote our Wednesday night Bible Class time to doing whatever it takes to grow the congregation. If you object to not having

another Bible class on Wednesday night consider:

1. Most of your members have probably sat through 5000 or so Bible classes and one more is not going to make a difference, and

2. You are presently having the Wednesday night Bible Class and your congregation is probably in decline anyhow.

Now let's presume that you can't disagree with those two statements and you are ready to take a fresh look at how to use that time to do the Great Commission or in other words to grow your congregation. If this were to happen on Wednesday night, all you need to do is to change the name from Wednesday Night Service to Wednesday Service Night. As we are suggesting that you might consider a time other than Wednesday, let's simply call the time SERVICE TIME. Wednesday is a tradition, not a scriptural requirement.

list.

That being said, how would you spend this SERVICE TIME in the best way to repeatedly engage your members with prospects? For sake of discussion, we shall presume that your member's SERVICE TIME will be 2 hours / week.

Remember, we agreed you are a small congregation, so you can't do 100 things. You need to pick 1 or 2 things and do them well.

You are a unique congregation in a unique area with a set of unique conditions. No



Now consider the two following statements:

1. If there is no contact between members and prospects, personal evangelism will not happen.
2. The #1 thing which will promote personal evangelism is to bring members into contact with prospects.

Those statements should be hard to disagree with. At best you might say it is not the #1 factor, but is for sure high on the

one else can tell you what is right for you. What can you do with 2 hours of each of your member's SERVICE TIME per week to engage prospects? We suggest that your members meet together and have an open discussion about their interests, their talents, the nature of their neighborhood, and the needs of your neighborhoods. They will buy into the concept better if they are in on the discussion.



IMAGE BY NORTHWEST ASSISTANCE MINISTRIES

The website paper OCCG-015 Church / Business Startup suggests that you might benefit in co-locating with a business like a childcare. If that works for you, a part of the incentive for the Daycare is that you can offer SERVICE TIME as basically free labor to help them start a business. If not free, at least discounted. That particular idea has the benefit that most of the users of daycare services are young families, exactly the group your congregation may be lacking.

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You may feed the hungry, visit nursing homes, adopt a section of road for picking up trash, host educational sessions from learning Spanish to high school tutoring, visit hospitals, or any of a number of other things. These are basically Side Door Events. You can see a discussion on these and more suggestions on the website paper OCCG-046 SIDE DOOR EVENTS.

The next thing to learn is that when you get your own strategy or plan, situations, neighborhoods, and member's interests will change over time. You should at least have an annual review of the effectiveness of a program and decide if it should be terminated in favor of something which will be a better use of available time and resources.

A program which is not doing much is better than no program. It is important to use our resources in a prudent way to support our part of the Great Commission in our generation.

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