

Chapter 3

SERVANT EVANGELISM

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”Showing God’s love in practical ways”*1

A SERVANT EVANGELISM OUTREACH*2

Saturday before Mother’s Day was not just any ordinary Saturday. It was a day for Servant Evangelism outreach – a flower give away. Long stemmed white carnations were ready. Each had a red bow and link card attached.*3 They would be given to mothers and wives in a residential area within walking distance from the church.

The church’s mission group coordinated the project. Some made link cards while others tied bows and link cards to the flowers. People were praying before and during the outreach. Some went by themselves and others went in pairs door to door to give away flowers to honor mothers and wives. This was an opportunity to do an act of kindness and share their faith . . . expecting nothing in return.

There were several positive responses from the residents. Several attended the morning worship service. Calls were made to the church. One was from a lady who has attended seasonal worship services. She called a short time after the flower give away and left a message.

“Hi. I’m a neighbor . . . and I received a flower from your church. You honored me as a mother. I am calling to say ‘thanks’ to you and your church and for the love you gave to the community. I am a member of another church, but I love the fact that I have a church such as yours so close to my home. Thank you so much.”

For the very first time, a bridge had been built between the residents and the church.

WHAT IS SERVANT EVANGELISM

Servant Evangelism is a simple, straight forward approach to sharing God’s love in simple and practical ways. Founding pastor Steve Sjogren and several people from the Vineyard Community Church, Cincinnati, Ohio loaded up bags of groceries and bought Christmas trees. They took them to housing projects on the north side of Cincinnati. Out of this action was born a vision to reach the city of Cincinnati and the world by serving others with no strings attached.*4

Servant Evangelism is doing what Jesus would do, expecting nothing in return, for the opportunity to tell another the Good News. It is . . .

“ . . . the proof side of proclaiming the Gospel”.*5

“... connecting with people through acts of amazing love while connecting them to a God of amazing grace”.*6

Servant Evangelism is being like Jesus

Servant Evangelism. . . .

- Opens doors into the hearts of your community
- Develops a doable ministry in and through your church
- Creates an opportunity for the church to “get involved”
- Gives the opportunity for “hands on” ministry
- Allows a few to touch many
- Can be done by children with adult leadership
- Can be from the youngest to the eldest
- Gives practical tips for public considerations
- Communicates God’s grace and love
- Is simple, non-aggressive and inexpensive
- Doesn’t require extensive training
- Offers evangelism and outreach opportunities
- And, it is loads of fun!

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR SERVANT EVANGELISM

Steve Sjogren is the pioneer of the Servant Evangelism concept. It is a Biblically based outreach modeled after the ministry of Jesus.*7

Jesus praying to His Father, prayed . . .

“As you sent Me into the world, I am sending them into the world” (John 17:16, NLT).

Jesus speaking to His Disciples said . . .

“... go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19, NLT),

Servant Evangelism is based on the Biblical premise that the Christian’s model for ministry is Jesus. Jesus not only modeled servanthood, He was THE servant.

“... the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28, NIV).

There were no traditional, cultural, religious or social barriers to across which Jesus did not cross to perform intentional Servant Evangelism.

“He had to go through Samaria on the way . . . Look around you! Vast fields are ripening all around us and are ready now for the harvest” (John 4:4, 35 NLT).

Jesus came as THE Servant to perform servanthood acts of kindness.

“Don’t be selfish; don’t live to make a good impression on others; be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself . . . Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though He was God, he did not demand and cling to His rights as God. He made Himself nothing (*laying aside His mighty power and glory*8*), He took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form” (Philippians 2:3, 5-7, NLT).

“Servanthood is much more than what you do and how you look to other people. It’s the way you think and the way you feel. Servanthood is a prominent characteristic of Jesus”.*9

SERVANT EVANGELISM – DWJD

Doing What Jesus Did

Servant Evangelism is more than a “Sunday religion” or asking the question “What Would Jesus Do” (WWJD). It is **DWJD – Doing What Jesus Did** and expecting nothing in return . . . **DWJD** outside the church walls . . . being where Jesus would be . . . where the people are. It is where Jesus was 2000 years ago and where He must be taken today. Outside the church walls is where the highest concentration of non-believers is found. A believer’s presence outside church walls in the midst of the people while doing a Servant Evangelism outreach, project or event could be the believer’s “Nicodemus” appointment . . . meeting someone who needs to see clearly and hear clearly the Good News.

“In its early days, the church lived its life out on the streets. Often hidden and harassed, with neither roof nor walls to hide within, Sunday morning sermons and practical programs were never an option for it. First century believers ministered and evangelized in the marketplace

“Today, a new generation of believers has rediscovered the marketplace.

“They see in the marketplace of today the natural arena of evangelism.

“They see in their jobs, professions and skills places of ministry.

“They carry Christ to a world seldom seen within the halls of our sanctuaries and with their discovery, return the church to where it began.”*10

“The early church served. Service is the identifying mark of Christians and the church. One of the best ways to reach people with the message of Jesus Christ today is through real and relevant acts of service . . . to *tell* the truth, we must *show* the truth. It is the model Jesus used. He served. He met needs. People listened.”*11

- Servant Evangelism provides the perfect setting for members of a church to participate in an outreach, project or event and share their faith. It can revolutionize a church’s ministry through strategic acts of kindness with “no strings attached”. It can be a powerful tool used by a church, designed to meet specific needs of those who are looking for the love of Christ in their lives. It can provide the opportunity for touching people in practical ways and give a personal salvation witness.

Acts of kindness through outreach, projects and events without evangelism is not Servant Evangelism.

Acts of kindness through outreach, projects and events

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Evangelism is Servant Evangelism

Bill Craig, Church Planter, Summit Trace Church, Frederick, Maryland says Servant Evangelism “is a key part to fulfilling our mission of meeting people where they are and taking them where God wants them to be We do it because we are commanded to go and love. In the process, over time, lives are changed”. Craig adds that “Servant Evangelism also provides an opportunity for participants to receive something they can’t buy anywhere else: fulfillment”.*12

Servant Evangelism is “a way of getting into the hearts of people. Every person has or has had a need at some time or another. In the meeting of those needs we are most genuine and find doors of receptivity so open the Gospel can be shared freely and clearly.”*13

We make our evangelism believable through Servant Evangelism.