



Christ has no body on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion for the world is to look out; yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now. ~ Teresa of Avila

Telephone Visitation | Rich DuBose

Why not use periodic, brief telephone visits to stay connected with your members? Once or twice a year, call every member and let them know you care.

If you decide to use this approach, be very clear about what you are doing. Because we usually don't call people without a specific reason, they may wonder what your real motive is. Quickly dispel their suspicions by saying, "I'm helping contact all of our members to keep them informed about our church and to give everyone an opportunity to share any needs or concerns they may have." This is especially helpful if you don't know the person you are calling.

To make your calls effective you need to practice simple telephone etiquette.

Generally, the best time to call is somewhere between 7:00 and 8:30 p.m. But every household is different. So, as you make calls, jot down the particulars for each family for future reference.

Before dialing, use your church directory to verify who resides in the home you're about to call. Make note of each name. Ask God to bless your words and voice inflections so the person you are calling knows you really care.

1. Make the call. Give your name and identify yourself as a pastor or elder from your church. As mentioned above, clearly state why you are calling. If they hesitate or sound uncertain, volunteer to call back at a more convenient time.

2. Be friendly. Be positive and ask how they and other family members are doing.

3. Be positive. Be careful not to share matters that are negative or critical (make sure you don't talk negatively about other members). You are not part of a gossip ring! Rather, your goal is to be a friendly point of contact with their church. If they have concerns about another person and wish to air a complaint, gently remind them to consider the instructions in Matthew 18:15-17.

4. How to deal with requests. If they have a request for transportation or some other physical need, tell them you will do some checking and call them back. Follow-up every request as quickly as possible.

5. Be confidential. Respect privacy. When members share matters with you and request they be kept in strict confidence, remember to honor their requests. Obviously, issues of a legal nature will need to be shared with the proper authorities. If there is ever a question, contact your pastor immediately. Be careful not to make promises you may not be able to keep.

6. Be available. Give them your number and let them know how you can be reached if they have further questions or needs. Finally, ask if you can close the call with prayer. Keep it short and remember to pray for the person you are talking with.

Typically, these kinds of calls should not last more than 3-4 minutes (at the most). There may be situations where a call will take longer because the person wants to talk more. Use your discretion as to what is best. Ultimately, your goal is to convey a sense of gratitude that they are part of your church family, and a sense of genuine compassion for their concerns and needs.

In conclusion, Paul gives good advice to those who are called to leadership roles.

"Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality." [em]--Romans 12:9-13 (The Message)