

Making Time for Relationships

A. The greatest thing we can do for someone is help them begin/grow in a relationship with Jesus.

“For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:19 (NLT)

B. ALL of us have been commissioned by Jesus to influence others for Him.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

Note: Relationships are the best means we have to influence others for Jesus.

“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.” 1 Thessalonians 2:8 (NIV)

Note: A big reason many of us don’t reach out more often is “We don’t have time!”

C. There are seven “rhythms” in our lives (things we already spend time doing) that we can use to build relationships and influence others for Jesus.

“And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.” Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (NLT)

1. Worship. I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD.” Psalm 122:1 (NLT)
2. Connect Groups. “Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)
3. Meals. Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax collector’s booth. “Follow me and be my disciple,” Jesus said to him. So Levi got up, left everything, and followed him. Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. Many of Levi’s fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them. But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus’ disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with such scum?” Jesus answered them, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent.” Luke 5:27-32 (NLT)
4. Conversations. Jesus, worn out by the trip, sat down at the well. It was noon. A woman, a Samaritan, came to draw water. Jesus said, “Would you give me a drink of water?” (His disciples had gone to the village to buy food for lunch.) The Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, “How come you, a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” (Jews in those days wouldn’t be caught dead talking to Samaritans.) Jesus answered, “If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking *me* for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water.” John 4:6-10 (MSG)
5. Service. There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor. About this time she became ill and died... But the believers had heard that Peter was nearby at Lydda, so they sent two men to beg him, “Please come as soon as possible!” So Peter returned with them...The room was filled with widows who were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas had made for them. But Peter asked them all to leave the room; then he knelt and prayed. Turning to the body he said, “Get up, Tabitha.” And she opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up! He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then he called in the widows and all the believers, and he presented her to them alive. Acts 9:36-41 (NLT)
6. Celebrations. “...there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus’ mother told him, “They have no more wine.” ...Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing... Jesus told the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” When the jars had been filled, he said, “Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies.” So the servants followed his instructions. When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from... he called the bridegroom over. “A host always serves the best wine first,” he said. “Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine.

But you have kept the best until now!" This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him. John 2:1-11 (NLT)

7. Recreation. Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." Mark 6:31 (NLT)

"I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some." 1 Corinthians 9:22 (NLT)

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Discussion Questions

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's lesson on "Making Time for Relationships" was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. Discuss the following seven "rhythms" in our lives (things we already spend time doing) that we can use to build relationships and influence others for Jesus:
 - Worship
 - Connect Group
 - Meals
 - Conversations
 - Service
 - Celebrations
 - Recreation

Which of these rhythms feels most natural to you as a means of building relationships and influencing others for Jesus? Which feels most uncomfortable? Why?

3. Who first invited you to worship at Centerpoint? What made you decide to come? Why are many people reluctant to visit a worship service or connect group unless they know someone?
4. Read Luke 5:27-32. Why did Jesus eat with "sinners"? How did he respond to criticism for doing so? Spend some time as a group brainstorming names of unchurched people whom you could buy lunch or a cup of coffee. Now pray for each other and ask God to give you opportunities and good conversations as you reach out through a mealtime this next week.
5. What do the following verses teach us about "going"?
 - Mark 16:15
 - Luke 24:47
 - John 20:21
 - Acts 1:8

How important is evangelism to Jesus? Why is it not more important to us?

6. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:8. What does it mean to share our lives with others as well as the gospel?
7. Discuss the following quotations:

"If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. If they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees. Let no one go there unwarned and unprayed for." C. H. Spurgeon

"I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some." The Apostle Paul

"There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies: 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.'" Introduction to John Wesley's General Rules for joining a Methodist society.

"The ravages of sin are not pleasant--but they are what Jesus came to forgive and heal. 'The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost' (Luke 19:10). Yet Christians often hesitate to reach out to those who are different. They want God to clean the fish before they catch them." - Jim Cymbala

"If Satan can't make you bad, he'll make you busy." Adrian Rogers