

Encountering those who do not attend church

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The longer you are associated with a church, the fewer non-Christian contacts you are likely to have. More of your friends and acquaintances will tend to be members of your church or like-minded people who attend another congregation.

Regardless of the community, the vast majority of the Canadian population don't attend church on Sunday mornings.

Making contacts with those who do not attend church, and building meaningful relationships with them is the key to evangelism in the 21st century. It follows Jesus' command to "go into the world and make disciples."

The need to reach out

Make a list of the people you regularly encounter outside of your church environment. Pray for them. Pray that you will find opportunities, based on a relationship of trust, to speak to them about the difference God and the church has made in your life. Listen to their life stories and share with them the Christian story. These people could be members of your family, your friends, co-workers, neighbours or members of your clubs or leisure groups.

The need to encounter people in non-threatening places

It is important that non-Christians encounter Christians in every day situations, in a non-official capacity. This will take time, often several years. Listening to people's life and faith stories is how these relationships begin. Opportunities for faith-sharing or having faith conversations will result from these contacts.

The importance of invitation

Having established a relationship of trust, invite them to attend worship or a function at your church. This will give them the opportunity to connect with your congregation.

Places to meet people who do not attend church include:

- hockey or curling rinks
- community theatre groups or choirs
- local coffee shops or hangouts
- baseball or soccer fields
- senior groups or youth activities
- hobby clubs - from crafts to model airplanes
- taking courses at a community college or night course at a local high school

Where do people in your community go?

What kind of Christian presence can you have there?

Do you have a skill or interest which is not church-related that you can share with people and groups in your community? That is another way to encounter people in your community that you might not otherwise meet.