



SERIES: July Series “OFF ROADING”

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Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Scripture: Luke 5:29-32

TITLE: Inviting Others In

Has your church ever done an “invite your friend to church” day? I think most churches have in many forms. But I’ve wondered in a post-Christian nation, why would a non-believer come to church? I don’t attend certain events at our local Lied Center because I’m not into ballet. I don’t go to vegan food truck rallies because I really like bacon. I don’t attend Hindu or Mormon worship services for obvious reasons. But I would hang out with a ballet enthusiast. I would hang out with a vegan, and even eat a potato burrito with sprouts and peppers – just no olives. I would gladly hang out with a Hindu, Mormon or any person with a different world-view. All they would need to do is invite me into their lives.

Inviting others into your life is an everyday way to do everyday outreach. And it is Biblical.

Listen to what happened to Levi the tax collector after Jesus called 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. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus’ disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with such scum?”

³¹ Jesus answered them, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. ³² I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent.” (Luke 5:29-32, NLT).

In a quick turn of events, Levi leaves his post of rejection and wealth to follow Jesus. What he does next is throw a Levi party. Levi didn’t say, “Look, guys, you need to come to church”. He instead invites his friends: the down and outers, the sinners and offenders, the people that usually drive us crazy. He says, “Guys, I met this guy Jesus. We’re going to hang out at my place. Won’t you come and hang out with us?”

This act of inviting others in goes against much of what was taught in church. Stay far away from the sinners, because they will pull you in and corrupt you. And that can happen. People can become cultural voyeurs. People can go to places or invite others into their life, with the hopes of making a forgivable offense.

The Pharisees response was of disgust, but Jesus’ response was what we need to hear: These are the people who need me: the broken and willing.

So today, what are the activities you are doing and would be a good fit to invite someone else in?

Could you invite a neighbor over for dinner?

Could you invite a coworker over for a game night?

Could you invite your kid's friend's parents over for coffee after the sporting event?

Could you invite your server out for a round of golf?

Could you invite that mom down the street to join you in your weekly shopping?

The possibilities are endless and are everyday outreach opportunities.

There is a time to invite people to church, but we should bring the church to them just like Levi did.

So this week, invite one person into your life in an everyday way. I know you've been praying for them. Now let the Spirit continue to work.