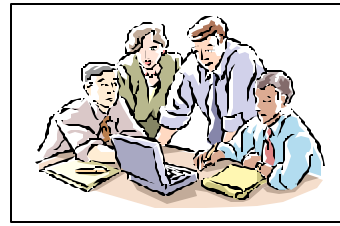


**Deacon Ministry Newsletter**  
**June Edition, 2005**  
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Leadership in a Secular Age**



**Creating a Welcoming Environment in Your Church**

In today's culture, so many feel so alone and isolated. The church must focus on creating a welcoming environment in every organizational entry point of the church. Michael Lindsay, of the Gallup Institute, recently released some significant research in this arena\*. People want to find ways and places to connect with others who share similar interests, challenges, lifestages, careers etc. Creating and tracking such networks can be a valuable addition to deacon ministry.

**Creating Places of Connection and Networking**

As deacons care for their family groups and observe community needs, they can create places of connection. Maintaining information databases will also be an excellent source for future ministry partners. Let me illustrate. Many families are touched by divorce and remarriage issues these days.

***What if a congregation started a database of those families who have successfully dealt with these life issues?***

This database becomes a valuable resource when others encounter such stressors. These families can then be enlisted/connected to those who are in need of encouragement, support, prayer and ministry.

What are some other possible places of connection or networks that could be tracked in your setting? Consider....

Blended Families	Unemployed
Families without children	Caregivers
Caring for Aging Parents	Cancer Survivors
Parents of Teens	Mothers of Preschoolers
Teenage Parents	Career Affinity Groups
Grief Recovery	and many others...

Warm caring relationships are craved in our culture. That is why "Walmart, Barnes and Noble and Starbucks have determined a warm smile and a comfortable non-threatening atmosphere is critical to their business. After all it's not about books or coffee – it's about building community among people who happen to like books or latte" according to Lindsay's research.

How do we create a connecting culture in church? Lindsay again offers excellent suggestions that could be fuel to improve any deacon ministry. Consider....

- Offering dinner groups for these networks once or twice a year

- Fostering pastoral relationships with your congregation via email
- Start a pastoral blog on your church's web site
- Before serving, pray as a team
- Create gatherings where you're able to meet with smaller groups of people
- "Someone you should meet" becomes a focus of a bulletin board or on your website

Taken from "Creating a Culture of Connectivity" by Michael Lindsay.  
Rev. Magazine March/April 2005 pp. 48-52 [www.revmagazine.com](http://www.revmagazine.com)

### **Practical Tips for Creating a Welcoming Atmosphere**

1. Greet people with a smile and comfortable handshake.
2. Learn names, family relationships.
3. Vary the places you sit in your congregation and classrooms each week. Get to know others. BE intentional and BE a model for others.
4. Introduce people to each other who share common interests, life challenges etc.
5. Create opportunities through deacon ministry to create networks, support systems and care-giving relationships.

### **Resources to Help Develop a Connecting Culture:**

\*Friendship: Creating a Culture of Connectivity in Your Church by Michael Lindsay.  
[www.group.com/giveback](http://www.group.com/giveback) or call 800-747-6060, x1324. for a FREE copy while supplies last.

[www.Friendshipfirst.com](http://www.Friendshipfirst.com) - A age graded resource and strategy for helping persons learn to make friends with Jesus and others

Spiritual Leadership in a Secular Age: Building Bridges Instead of Barriers by Edward Hammett, Lake Hickory Resources, 2005 [www.lakehickoryresources.com](http://www.lakehickoryresources.com)

The Connecting Church by Randy Frazee, Zondervon Press, 2003.

Culture Shift by Wayne Corderio and Robert Lewis, Jossey-Bass, 2005.

"Netiquette for Congregations" by Ivan Evison

<http://www.congregationalresources.org/FrontPage/Netiquette.asp>

Congregational Resource Guide for Lay Ministry -

<http://www.congregationalresources.org/LayMin/Home.asp>

***Hospitality Evangelism: Sharing the Bread of Life, Produced by Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, 2000. Order by calling 1-888-801-4223. An excellent intensive training for raising the awareness and skill of the congregations in receiving newcomers in an effective manner.***

**<https://ssl.perfora.net/s98343579.oneandoneshop.com/sess/utm;jsessionid=15428379f162883/shopdata/index.shopsript>**

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