

The One-Another Ministry

The ministry of greeting in churches today often seems to rank below that of preaching, teaching, and music. While that may be indeed be true, it is important that the ministry of greeting is most often the first impression guests get of your church – well before any of the others listed above! Greeting is a ministry – one that is becoming more important than ever in today’s experience-oriented culture. The guests coming to your church next Sunday may not understand all the words they will hear, but the warm and caring actions of your greeting team will speak very loud and clear. To a person seeking Truth and Peace, an ounce of kindness is worth a pound of preaching. Christian kindness is a ministry for church greeters who care deeply about people.

No assignment in the church is more one-on-one than the ministry of greeters. The foyer is their chapel, the information desk their pulpit, and the walk-around spaces their parish. Church greeters have a one-another ministry – face to face, hand to hand, and heart to heart with the people they are called to serve. From the largest megachurch to the smallest rural church, their Christian service is to one customer at a time. And to make their service even more important, church greeters are the first face and voice guests meet when arriving at church.

Church greeting should be elevated to its fully deserved and recognized status as a one-another ministry. Scattered throughout Paul’s letter to the Romans are seven references to the one-another ministry. What a great spiritual and biblical foundation for the ministry of church greeters! Here are some brief thoughts about these one-anothers by Leslie Parrot, author of *Serving as a Church Greeter*.

Accept One Another – Romans 15:7 gives us the ministry of mutual acceptance, resting on Christ’s teaching of unconditional love. A verbal greeting and the offer of a handshake are ways of focusing on the other person. As Jesus accepts us – no matter what – accept each and every person who comes through the church door.

Honor One Another – Romans 12:10 provides the one-another ministry of an encouraging word. Effective greeters hone their skills at the capacity to come up with a few words or a brief sentence that is appropriate to the person and the situation.

Be Kind to One Another – This one-another kindness is found in Romans 12:10 as well. Deliberate acts of kindness welcome worshippers no matter what their week has been. A greeter with a kind heart can set the tone for the rest of the day with his or her actions.

Love One Another – Found in Romans 13:8, this is the one-another ministry of unconditional goodwill. It is expressed in a positive attitude toward all people, a love that bans all kinds of verbal abuse and an attitude of love toward life in general and people in particular.

Understand One Another – Romans 14:13 phrases it negatively, but a positive approach and a spiritual understanding will overcome a negative attitude. Greeters need to also remember that their lives outside the church make a powerful statement, and must be lived in an uncompromising manner.

Instruct One Another – Romans 15:14 reminds greeters that they are to be role models in the fruit of the Spirit at all times. They live out their craft by being, doing, and demonstrating, not by telling, admonishing, and finger-pointing.

Greet One Another – In Romans 16:16 we are reminded of the ministry of the human touch and its import healing and calming qualities. The greeter needs to be sensitive to the manner of the touch and the recipient; in most cases, the offer of a handshake is appropriate for guests, while a friendly hug may be more appropriate for friends and long-time members. The key is to express a genuine welcome in the manner most appropriate.

A Final Admonition: **Serve One Another** – Paul, writing in Galatians 5:13, spelled out the final one-another: a ministry of service that leads greeters to welcome all in the name of Christ, serving all who come without prejudice or judgment.

When the greeters at your church understand and practice these one-another ministries, they are well on the way to living out the presence of Christ within – and it becomes very obvious to those to whom they are extending a friendly hand.

For more on this topic, *The Hospitality Factor* is available as a Leadership Seminar menu selection

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