

## 3 Questions to Improve Your First Impressions

**Your first time guests often decide if they will return within the first ten minutes. Some are more forgiving and will give you a second chance, but most won't.**

The unchurched look for reasons not to return. Even though they were probably invited by a friend, even friendship can't override a blown first impression.

It's like your first visit to a restaurant. Your first ten minutes usually determines if you will return. Even if your experience "gets better" through the meal, your initial perspective is so skewed that it's difficult to see past those first impressions. The way the hostess greeted you, the way you were escorted to a table, and the way you were treated for the first few minutes largely determines the remainder of the experience.

The same is true in your church. Your first impressions absolutely determine if the first time guest returns for a second time.

*"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."*

Colossians 4:5-6

**Here are three simple questions to help you improve your first impressions.**

### 1) How do you Greet people?

We've all been in a restaurant where it seemed like we were intruding on the hostess's reception area. It's a terrible experience. We wait and wonder. We check in and are told, "As you can see we are very busy, we'll get to you when we can."

In stark contrast, one of my favorite Mexican restaurants in San Diego always has a wait. They learn your name, bring out free chips and salsa, and if you wait too long, bring you a free iced tea!

How are people greeted in your church? What do your guests experience in the parking lot – smiles or impatient waving and pointing? Do your greeters make people feel like a million bucks or an inconvenience?

### 2) How do you Seat people?

That twenty second walk means everything. I've visited restaurants where the hostess walked slowly, made pleasant conversation, and asked if I was happy with the table. I'm already smiling. I've also experienced hostesses who seemed to sprint off, look back impatiently

because I stopped to say hi to someone, dropped the menus off at the table and leave.

Whenever I see an usher pointing rather than walking a guest to a place to sit, I cringe. If the visitor knew where to go, they wouldn't need an usher. Especially when a guest is late, they know they are late, so make them feel even more welcomed! Worship has already started, it's dark, they can't see well, and people are standing. That's intimidating. You can put them at ease. You can make the difference that inspires them to come back! It's the little things that matter.

### **3) How do you Treat people?**

Whether it's the leaders in the nursery, the person serving coffee, or the prompts from the worship leader, your guests should know if you care about them.

Treat each guest like they were a king or queen!

Go the second mile. If you don't know the answer to a question, find the answer. Do all you can to make their experience warm, personal and engaging.

Serve with joy.

Be real, be yourself, and help each person feel right at home.

*"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."*

Matthew 7:12

> [Read more from Dan.](#)

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