

IGNORED

Have you ever gone to a restaurant and received poor service?

I can remember one time going to a restaurant with my parents and brother. We were seated and ordered our drinks. The waitress said she would be back in a minute to take our food order. That was no big deal, as we hadn't had a chance to look over the menu. This was a place we rarely went to as we were on vacation and didn't have one of these restaurants in the town where we were living. After a minute or two we were ready to order.

We waited for the waitress to come back but she hadn't. This place was an open place. It was one big room where you could see every table and booth. You could even see right in to the kitchen window. Because we could not see our waitress, we flagged down another one who was then supposed to get ours. She never came.

Finally we decided to leave. We left \$5 on the table with a note saying, "This is for the drinks," and we walked out and ate elsewhere. The whole time the whole staff was at the kitchen window talking to each other and ignoring us. As we were leaving, someone else was coming in. We gave a quick and frustrated, "Good Luck," to them. They understood and turned around and left before they got through the threshold of the door.

It is frustrating to be ignored. Even in our self-serve culture of gasoline, checkout lines at the supermarket, and information on our phones we still have a deep need within us for community. And if we are ignored in that community, the natural response is to either find a new community or reject the community.

Jesus spent a lot of time with people that were ignored by the established community. We was with sinners, tax collectors, he even let a sinful woman wash his feet. It is no surprise people were drawn to Jesus because of this.

Are we the same? Do we ignore people in our own flock? How are we supposed to engage in the healing process that Jesus provides if we do not know what spiritual and physical sickness exist in our church?

Do we ignore visitors? When folks show up in can be scary. I remember a story of a man who sat in the church parking lot for months before he ever came inside because of fear. Studies show that if people can make three friends in a church, they are almost guaranteed to stay.

If we want our church to grow, we cannot be in the ignoring business. Remember, the natural response to being ignored is to go somewhere else or reject the church altogether. People are 9 times more likely to give bad feedback than they are good feedback.

Read: James 2:1-12

--Alex Swango