

## *PK's Perspectives...* Sharing the Gospel

Okay. From the get-go, let me be clear: it is a great thing to invite people to attend church on Easter Sunday. Absolutely. Bring someone – several some ones – to church with you on Sunday morning. Having said that, I find myself wondering how unsaved people feel about our invitations to attend Easter Sunday services and especially if Easter is the only time we invite our lost/unchurched friends to attend church. Easter Sunday has deep and profound significance for me and every other person who has surrendered to the Gospel of Christ. For the past 49 years I've been loving Jesus and learning what it looks like to follow Him...to walk in His shadow. I'm realizing that the incredible truth of the resurrection of Christ is foundational to every other thing I have come to believe about Jesus. Absent the resurrection, Jesus is simply another charismatic figure in the pantheon of religious hucksters who attract a crowd. Easter Sunday for me is about remembrance, encouragement, celebration, and a soul hope that erupts out of the empty tomb. The reality of Easter is my emotional/spiritual/relational anchor. And if I'm not very sensitive to the world around me, I wrongly assume that Easter Sunday is important for everyone. But Easter Sunday has little or no relevance for the person unfamiliar with the Gospel story and who has never embraced the saving grace offered by Christ. (If you're struggling to accept the notion that Easter is just not very important to some people, you need to break out of your cocoon... caterpillars considerably outnumber butterflies!) To many people, Easter is more about a long holiday weekend than celebrating the supernatural resurrection of Jesus. So in my best attempt to emulate Paul's missionary method of "becoming all things to all people," I try to connect with the mind of the lost person who receives a yearly Easter invitation from his or her Jesus friends.

If I was an unbeliever, and the only time you went out of your way to invite me to church was Easter Sunday, I would be confused and wonder what's going on in your church the other 51 Sundays of the year that you don't want me to know about. Your once a year invitation to attend church would be more like a reminder that I'm not a believer...that I don't belong. I remember when I was a young kid and my family was not a member of the local Country Club. Once or twice a year someone who was a member would invite me to go swimming at the Club and I can remember feeling awkward because my infrequent invitations to enter the sanctuary of the Country Club served to highlight the fact that I wasn't a member; I was an outsider being allowed a brief peek behind the curtain.

To an unbeliever, the "Easter only" invitation to church is like the annual "Open to the Public One Day Sale" at a members' only retailer; there is no implied expectation that you will return before the next "Open to the Public" event. The shocked look I've seen on the faces of Christians when a lost person declines the Easter Sunday invite owing to their plans to go camping or skiing at Lake Sinclair is confirmation that we don't get the insider/outsider vibe of "Easter only" invitations.

All this to say your Easter Sunday invitation will probably have more impact if it's one of maybe 30,40, or 51 other such invites; your Easter invite will have more impact if it naturally flows out of the frequent God conversations you're initiating with your friends. Absolutely invite friends to Easter Sunday...and also invite them the Sundays before & after Easter! Cya Sunday morning in Sunday School & Worship, PK.