

WHAT'S A SUNDAY SCHOOL MEMBER TO DO?

MARK 1:14-20

AUGUST 27, 2006 SUNDAY A.M.

INTRODUCTION

- A. Has S.S. run its course?
 - 1. Most S.S.'s are in decline.
 - 2. Most people don't understand the purpose of S.S.
 - a. Teach
 - b. Reach
 - c. Care
 - d. Evangelize
 - 3. Most are closed to newcomers.
- B. Dr. Thom Rainer in his book, "...The Secret of Keeping People in Church", (1999), says..
 - 1. The churches that are closing the back door (i.e. retaining their members), have a commitment to S.S. (pp39-40).
 - 2. Furthermore, according to Rainer, S.S. is not only our past, its also our future.
 - 3. Rainer adds, "Growing churches not only have teachers who know their tasks, they also have class members who know what they should do too.
 - 4. What is a S.S. member to do?
 - a. Not just show up. Although that is very much appreciated.
 - b. Not just sit and soak in the Bible, although that's another wonder thing to do.
 - 5. Dr. Rainer says there are three things every S.S. member should do.
 - i. First, grow spiritually by discovering the great truths of the Bible.
 - ii. Second, connect with other class members through fellowship and ministry.
 - iii. Third, invite unchurched and lost people to S.S.
 - 6. Today, lets take a closer look at that third task of every S.S. member: inviting unchurched and lost people.
 - 7. In Mark 1:14-20, we see an example of Jesus' practice of inviting people. What did he do?

I. FIRST, JESUS HAD A PLAN FOR INVITING PEOPLE.

- A. We see his plan in verse 14.
- B. Notice two things about Jesus' plan for inviting people.
 - 1. First, when did he invite people?
 - a. It was a time of difficulty ("John was arrested"). This through people into a panic
 - b. People are often more open to spiritual things during times of crisis or difficulty (i.e. illness, job loss, divorce, financial set back, etc).
 - c. David Francis put it this way, "People are very receptive to an offer of help or expression of concern when they are experiencing one of life's big transitions, challenges, or frontiers (things they've never experienced before). Satan may whisper to us, "Give them some space; that's all they need." As usual, he is a liar! People need people during life's crises. Sometimes we need to "weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15b) when death, disease, or divorce strike. Sometimes we need to "rejoice with those who rejoice" (Romans 12:15a) with the birth of a child, a wedding, an anniversary, a promotion, or a new home." (**The 3D Sunday School**, p. 10)
 - 2. Second, who did Jesus invite?
 - a. Jesus invited people around him-v.16.
 - b. Who are the people around us we should invite to S.S.?
 - i. Friends.
 - ii. Relatives.
 - iii. Neighbors.
 - iv. Church members not in S.S.

- c. David Francis says, “While strangers respond to invitations to church or Christ, the most responsive people are those in your existing social networks. People you play with, care for, work with, or live near. They’re watching you. You have the opportunity to be a positive influence on them by the way you live. You invest in your relationship with them through acts of kindness and words of encouragement. Maybe you’ve dropped hints about church. That’s great . . . but not enough. You need to invite them. The percentages are on your side that they’ll say yes!” (The 3-D Sunday School, p. 11)
- d. Remember, we learned from last week that 82% of unchurched people will come to church if someone would just ask them. (Dr. Thom Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door* (2003).
- e. We should also encourage students and children to invite others too.

II. SECOND, JESUS NOT ONLY HAD A PLAN, HE ALSO HAD A REASON OR INVITING PEOPLE.

- A. What was Jesus reason for inviting people? He knew that people need the good news-v.15.
- B. Notice that those people Jesus invited were receptive to his invitation-vv. 16-18.
- C. People still need that same good news today.
- D. Also, Dr. Rainer says people today are still receptive to our invitation and message.
 - 1. The unchurched are not antichurch. (4 of 10 have a friendly attitude; only 16 percent are negative.)
 - 2. Over 17 million Americans will accept Christ if presented with the gospel. Another 43 million are close.
 - 3. Most unchurched persons believe in the existence of both heaven and hell. (79 percent and 70 percent respectively)
 - 4. Most of the unchurched have a fairly high view of the Bible. (One- third believe it is totally true; another 46 percent believe it is generally true.
 - 5. Most of the unchurched would rather talk to a layperson than a minister about religious matters.
 - 6. Easter is still a key time to invite the unchurched.
 - 7. Many of the unchurched wonder why their Christian neighbors and co-workers do not invite them to church.

CONCLUSION

- A. S.S. hasn’t run its course.
- B. SS. Teachers do need to rediscover their tasks of teaching, reaching, caring and evangelizing people.
- C. S.S. class members must also recognize their tasks.
 - 1. Discover the great truths of God’s word and apply them to our lives.
 - 2. Connect with other S.S. members through fellowship and ministry.
 - 3. Invite others to S.S. and Church.
 - 4. Jesus did it, and so should we.