

PEW- "SECTION HOSTS" Sun. AM Sanctuary "Relationship Enrichment"

I. RELATIONAL TECHNOLOGY" means intentional Relationship Development!

Following is one adaptable strategy to relationally love, connect with (& track) Sunday AM people, both regulars and visitors: getting beyond too many watching the back of the head in front for 90 minutes. People come to church for many reasons but stay for just one: "relationship." Intentional relationship development is crucial!

Wal-mart's 'Welcome' (or K-Mart's)?: Every Wal-Mart (inside the front door) positions a person (or couple) to welcome e-v-e-r-y visitor. Most churches do similar. But beyond this, employees' blue vests read on back: "How may I help you?"

What if: Each section & pew had an assigned, trained section-host/hostess strategically placed throughout the sanctuary to warmly welcome & greet all of God's family (regulars & newcomers) on an ongoing, week-after-week basis?

What if: small-group "relational richness" could be also be experienced throughout y-o-u-r Sun. AM pews...& people?

II. In John 6, Jesus feeds the 5,000. Andrew finds a boy with 5 loaves and 2 fishes. Jesus blessed and broke the bread, then gave to His twelve to feed the crowd. **But first**.....

*Jesus intentionally instructs His disciples: "Make the people sit in groups...of 50's & 100's"(Mk 6:39/ Lk. 9:14)
"so they threw themselves down in ranks of 100's and 50's looking like so many garden plots (Mk 6:39, Amplified)*

Jesus was "CARE - RETROFITTING" the Miracle...and the crowd!!

Jesus was modeling for us: one way to deal with "l-a-r-g-e-r" is "smaller". He intentionally created "smallness".

He created groups: smaller, relational units...from the huge crowd of 5,000! (*Exodus 18:18-21*)

Jesus was relationally "retrofitting". Relationship takes place in "small".... not "large".

Pastor Cho (Seoul) says: "Our church is the largest church in the world...because it's the smallest".

III. "CARE RETRO-FITTING"...even as Calif.'s overpasses are "earthquake-retrofitted"

Due to increased earthquake intensity, *Cal. Trans.* "retrofits" freeway overpasses. Not tearing down 1,000's of pre-existing overpasses, they take existing ones & add benefit. Steel coils are placed into (& under) each overpass ending's steel girders, *intentionally implanting* the desired benefit of greatly increased "flex"!

Pastor: What if your Sanctuary was relationally "Care-Retrofitted" ... with Section-Hosts... to add increased relational-connection (from week-to-week) between regulars, newcomers & even new believers!

Questions & Answers) on "Pew/Section-Hosts"

Q: How many rows should a pew/section-host (or couple) cover?

A: Anywhere up to perhaps a half-dozen rows max.

Q: What if a section is too large...when pews sections are 15 people wide (& 10+ rows deep) ?

A: No pew host (or couple) can cover 15 people wide by 10 rows deep. A 2nd & 3rd "section-couple" could cover the middle & back 1/3rd of these larger sections. (Use ¼ section hosts if needed)

Q: Can a couple work just one row or two?

A: Certainly! There are no formulas. Simply: e-v-e-r-y regular & visitor needs to be relationally connected with.

Q: What if a pew /section-host is sick . . . (or out-of-town) . . .on a given Sunday?

A: An apprentice section-host (or "back-up" hosts) can eventually be chosen (& trained) to help and fill in.

Q: Numerically, how many persons (seating spaces) should a pew-host ideally be assigned to work with?

A: Pew/ section-hosts shouldn't attempt to be personal with more than 30-40 people maximum!

Q: How does a pew-host interact with the regular attenders?

A: Since 90% of church attendees sit in the same seat each week, friendly "section-hosts" will naturally build and deepen ongoing relationships with regulars from week-to-week.

Q: Will this "section-host program" interfere with our existing visitor-care systems?

A: This only adds to (& enriches) what's already in place .

Q: Does this compete with usher teams (& visitor-packets) coming up or down the aisle to recognize visitors?:

A: Visitor packets can still be given out by ushers (or by section-hosts who then can follow-up both during & after service.)

Q: How would a section/pew-host recognize a visitor, to give them a visitor packet in the 1st place?

A: Section hosts will already know 90% of "regular" & usually have 1 visitor per weekend (perhaps 1 per month) in their specific area. (*Visitors will *stand out* once a section-host really "knows" his area's people.)

Q: Could attendance & absentee "tracking" occur in the pew (section). . . and be done by section-hosts ?

A: This can be done "organically"...or "formally" (by listing on a "sanctuary seating-map" *who usually sits where in each section*. Hosts can pray for those absent & even gently tell them the next week they were missed & prayed for.
*** (People dislike being "tracked", but they do like being sincerely missed.)

Q: How does this de-centralize "normal" visitor & regular member absentee follow-up from the church's central office?

A: These closer relationships (nurtured by a pew-host sitting with one-another weekly) can help relationally pray for & even call, write....or connect with those absent any given week..

Q: When a section has no visitors on a given Sunday . . . what does a pew-host do?

A: When there's no visitor, a pew/section host is there just to greet & love-on regulars & connect with God's people!

Q: Does a pew-host have to leave his or her pew during Sunday AM service "greeting time"?

A: They "get to" step out, greet & hug their little, chosen area's regular "family" and newcomers.

Q: How would one implement a "pew/section host" hospitality system like this?

A: Begin with much prayer! Locate key administratively-gifted, organizing ... visionary...and loving hospitality people to format your section-host Task Force. These can (in time) recruit & train members for a church-wide section-host team!

Small Group benefits & applications of the pew/section-host concept :

Q: Couldn't a "pew-host system" also help in connecting with newcomers for the small groups ministry?

A: Absolutely! One representative (or more) from a given cell group could be assigned to sit in each "section area."

These person(s), *thru weekly developing relationships*, will *build better "r-e-l-a-t-i-o-n-a-l bridges" with non-cell group* attending regulars, sharing small group news and building deeper friendships in the sanctuary.

Q: Could an entire small group be invited to sit together in a certain pew (or area) on a year-round (or short-term) basis?

A: Definitely! They could use their group's love (& relational warmth) like the warmth of a fire to attract others to their group.

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

- 1) "Start-up" initially may be attempted on an "alpha" & "beta test" basis (unannounced): a section or two...at a time!
- 2) Do **n-o-t** plan on going church-wide with the system all at once.
- 3) Don't announce it from the pulpit as a program. Let it organically announce itself relationally in the pews.
- 4) Perhaps send a letter to Regular church members informing some of the dynamics & benefits (if you like)
- 5) Do n-o-t use the "Ready! Fire! AIM!" launching sequence!
- 6) Accept the fact that it is going to be a process ...and it will only get better as Pew Hosts are trained & become comfortable with their new Hospitality & "relational technologist" roles.
- 7) Plan on "early", "mid", "late", & "never" adapters: intentionally extend grace, love & patience to each grouping!

Q: What common mistakes would a Pew Host make and need to be trained to avoid?

Common mistakes of Pew Hosts would be to A) to come on too strong, too fast with a visitor B) To hang out with their Christian friends & "ignore the visitor" C) to assume that the visitor or newcomers will D) to assume that when people are absent, they truly do NOT want to be missed, as repeated survey show they do!

Qualities (& Characteristics) of a Great Pew or Section "Hospitality-Host":

Character: Must be a godly, known and trusted regular member (or long-time attendee) of the church:

Attendance frequency: Must be an 11 out of 12 attendees

Must be spiritually mature to follow orders, to report faithfully, to

Must have a sense of confidentiality. Must be a friendly, hospitality

(other qualities can be chosen as Pastor choice: tither (or regular donor), leadership, or Regular attendees more than Sunday AM,

What Is N-O-T required is:

Spiritual maturity to pray the prayer of faith, not required a Bible school degree or vast Bible knowledge

Training:

Referrals: