

CULTURE OF INVITATION

an inspirational short message by
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Table of Contents

Culture of Invitation

Invitation culture in the ministry of Jesus

Invitation culture of the early apostles

Developing an invitation culture in our Sphere of influence

Steps to invitation

Prayer

About the author

CULTURE OF INVITATION

The culture of invitation is eternally engraved in the fabric of human nature.

That sounds heavy..... so, what does it mean?
Well, inviting people is a key part of what we all do. And that isn't something that has come about by chance. God set it up that way when He called the Host of Heaven and said, "Come, let us make man in our own image..."

We invite our friends, strangers, and colleagues to places, events or relationships nearly every day.

An *invitation* is so important because it reassures us that we'll be welcome at an event, or a place or (even more important) in a relationship. Without it, we all fear we may be undesirable intruders.

Little wonder that millions of pounds are spent yearly in the UK on invitations and publicity – via

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and yes, still via newspapers and magazines.

Each one of us gives out and receive so many invitations that we hardly even think about it. But my question is this: do we invest as many resources, as much time, commitment and effort in invitations to meet Jesus, to be healed by Him, to join His kingdom? Or is our commitment to a culture of *Christian* invitation actually dying?

What is a culture of invitation?

A *culture* is a way of life – it becomes as natural to you as breathing.

An *invitation* is asking somebody -- to go somewhere or do something.

So let's put the words together: "Culture of Invitation" = *getting the habit* of encouraging people we meet to go somewhere/do something with us.

Every one of us, every believer making a habit of inviting people to share in the incredible love, grace and redemption of a relationship with Jesus? – that's a beautiful picture, isn't it?

Now put two or three real people into that picture: maybe one of your friends, a relative, your spouse, a colleague or neighbour? If/when you do that, that really is a beautiful picture – would you agree?

David said,
“I was glad when they said unto me
Let us go into the house of the LORD.” (Psalm
122:1 KJV)

I am so keen for us (God’s people) to wake up, to get back our culture of invitation! It really is part of God’s agenda for salvation and Global reconciliation.

Good News

“Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.” And he added, “These are true words that come from God.”
(Rev 19:9 NIV)

Searching through the scriptures, we can find the perfect models of this culture of invitation. I will be sharing them with you in this book.

Firstly we can learn so much from the invitation culture that Jesus developed during His ministry on earth.

Secondly, let's look at the invitation culture of the Early Apostles of the church.

Lastly, we need to ask how these experiences can help us in developing an effective Invitation Culture in our context right now.

INVITATION CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Jesus invited people to be blessed individually and collectively.

Jesus had a culture of inviting everyone wherever He went in order to reach them with His love ministry.

- *He went to people where they were...*

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”

-Matt 4:23 ASV

- *Jesus did not just make general invitations; he also invited individuals...*

“And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.”

Luke 19:5 KJV

- *His ministry fed, healed and saved thousands.*

“Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat.”

-Matt 14:15-18 ESV

- *Jesus invited everyone to repent, to change their life direction*

(because God has always called people to repentance and a second chance):

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.”

Isa 1:18 ESV

- *Jesus invited people to discipleship and mentorship.*

“And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

“Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

-Matt 4:18-19 NKJV

- *Jesus showed up in the middle of business and in the everyday lives of people, even strangers who later turned out to become his faithful friends and disciples.*

“...And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach...”

-Mark 3:13-15

And none of this Culture of Invitation was actually new to Jesus. After all, Jesus is the Son of God and the perfect representation of His person, nature and Glory.

“I and my Father are one”

-John 10:30 KJV

And ever since the Garden of Eden, God had been calling us human beings home - to the restoration of what has been lost - to relationship with God.

“And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?”

-Gen 3:9 KJV

INVITATION CULTURE OF THE EARLY APOSTLES

It's no surprise that the invitation culture of the early apostles was so similar to the pattern Jesus had established. Let's watch them going about their daily lives:

- *The Apostles went into every city to invite people to Christ.*

The Apostles obeyed Jesus' instruction to go into every town to minister the love of God (to everyone they came across) without discrimination:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

-Acts 1:8 ESVUK

And it wasn't just a few elite leaders that were 100% committed:

- *All the early Christians invited people to their homes - the place church started:*

“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.”

-Acts 2:46 NIV

- *The early Christians shared material gifts as a love ministry to everyone they invited:*

The early church shared things in common so that no one lacked a thing...

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.”

-Acts 2:44-45 NIV

- *The early Apostles used their spiritual gifts as an avenue to invite many into repentance and membership of the body of Christ.*

They ministered miracles and signs ...

“Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

-Acts 3:6 NIV

“The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people ... more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.”

-Acts 5:12-14 NIV

- *The Apostles invited everyone to repentance.*
The apostles gave glory to God and used every opportunity to invite the people to Christ.

“Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

-Acts 2:38-39 NIV

“...Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

-Acts 2:41 NIV

- *The Apostles invited people to discipleship and mentorship.*

The Apostles invited other to learn from them to carry on the excellent work of the Gospel.

“Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.”

-Act 16:3

- *They corrected those who were less knowledgeable in love.*

“[Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.”

-Acts 18:26 NIV

DEVELOPING AN INVITATION CULTURE IN OUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

"...How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news...!"

-Rom 10:15 NIV

How can we imitate the invitation culture of Jesus? He is very clear, after all, about the warm welcome he expects us to spread far and wide:

"...So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests."

-Matt 22:10 NIV

Let's be practical: *how* can we be a blessing to everyone around us?

- *We need to begin to look beyond the space of our own comfort. Of course we need to look out for the comfort of others as well! Our lives and our resources should be a blessing to others—*

not just to ourselves. It is through us they are most likely to see the love of Jesus.

- *Let us imitate the way Jesus prayed for people:* Jesus *began* our work of salvation in prayer. He prayerfully selected His disciples. And even on the night of His betrayal, He prayed for us all.

“And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them, he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;”

-Luke 6:12-13 NKJV

- *Part of our culture of invitation needs to be a culture of prayer!* Just like Jesus (and Paul, and all the early apostles) we need to pray for those who will in future respond to our invitations.

And let's not wait for people to approach us before we bless them. Merely seeing someone should be

enough to start us praying for them and looking for ways to bless them.

The gospel is not going to spread if we leave it to what is said from the pulpit alone.

Let's make effective use of every medium we have at our disposal: Facebook, Twitter, Emails, newsletters, conversations at work, in schools, even on our street. One-to-one communication is the bedrock of better relationships. House fellowships, door to door evangelism, invitations to Bible studies and programmes are necessary as well.

Choose to mentor someone today

do you know how to mentor someone? Are you mentoring someone in the way of Christ? Act like Jesus and the apostles: make the decision to mentor someone today. Help someone to get closer to Jesus today!

So, join in! Join in with the culture of invitation today!

Pray. Pray for the people you meet at work. Pray for your friends. Pray for your family.

Reach out.

Engage.

Share with someone today what God is saying.

The words you speak can heal someone's pain and heartache.

Your church needs an effective workforce:
volunteer!

Whenever you are prompted by the Holy Spirit to reach out, don't hesitate.

STEPS TO INVITATION

Pray for confidence

Ask God to lead you in natural conversations where people will ask you questions.

Let the Holy Spirit guide you in inviting someone to:

- a conversation,
- a group,
- a public gathering
- orto follow Jesus.

Put Jesus' culture of invitation into your daily life.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank you there is a Biblical culture of invitation. I thank you for you for the power and authority of your Word. I choose this day to be part of the body of Christ who will invite others to come to our church gatherings – who will invite people into Christ's kingdom. Help me by the power of your Holy Spirit to have the confidence to invite others. I ask this in Jesus' name.

About the Author

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