

Ministry Team Meeting 5: Who Do We Want to Attract?

(Supplies needed: copies of this guide; Bibles; pens or pencils)

Opening Prayer: Jesus, we thank you for the people/students you have blessed us with in this ministry. Help us remain faithful to serving them and helping them grow deeper in their relationship with you. At the same time, we know that your heart is that Your Kingdom would expand in this place. Give us your eyes to see those You are calling us to serve and love in Your name. We can't wait to see where you are working and are thankful for the chance to join in! In Jesus' Name we pray and depend, Amen!

Something to Consider:

A while back I found myself in a conversation with some teammates and a pastor who was visiting from another state. As he asked us where we saw our church moving and growing in the years ahead we began listing off a lot of the ideas we've had for ministry. He thought many of the ideas were great but then asked a question we struggled to answer: "So who are you trying to reach with those ideas?" It somewhat stopped us in our tracks because depending on what program or idea we shared there might have been a different person in mind. While each ministry area may focus on a different demographic, having a clear picture of who we're trying to serve and reach clarifies our vision even more.

In youth ministry for example, if your community is filled with a bunch of teens who have grown up in the church but have slowly faded away and become disconnected over time, your ministry may look very different than a church in an urban area filled with people who perhaps have never even heard of Jesus. If you have good connections with the one or two main schools in the area the way you do ministry may be different than in areas where you have 20 different schools represented by your group. As we dig into how God might be inviting you to join in the ministry He's doing in the students around your community, let's also dig into His Word.

Scripture:

Read Isaiah 61:1-3 and Luke 4:17-21.

- What reactions do you have to these passages?
- Look at the adjectives of those in need in the verses. How do you see those describing the people you're hoping to serve? (For example, as I think about many teenagers today I see them caught in a *prison* of comparison, constantly trying to figure out how they can measure up to others around them.) You might also consider these things literally. Is God calling you to reach out to actual prisoners?

A Team Activity:

Use the stick figure below (or draw your own) to start describing the person you could see your ministry focusing your efforts around. What are their needs? What do they like to do? What do they think about? (e.g. by their eyes you might write "blind to the identity they have in Christ," by their feet "walking away from Christ," etc.)

Discussion:

Share your stick people and consider one or more of these questions:

- Is there a specific demographic of people we are hoping to attract or keep? (It's hard to narrow this down because, of course, we all want to reach everyone, but getting a somewhat narrow focus helps us be more effective).

- Where do we see God at work already in our community? Do we sense some way He's asking us to join in?
- How does this group fit with the group we have?
- How might our ministry change, positively or negatively, if we are honestly trying to attract this "who"? What challenges come with attracting this demographic? What joys?

Practical Action Step:

Spend the next week asking God to open your eyes to one person or people group He wants you to love, either individually or as a group. Pray that He would show you how He is already working in their hearts and to give you a chance to join in and serve them. Once He brings someone to mind, find a way to serve them this week.

Closing Prayer:

Use this prayer or say your own; perhaps ask if anyone has requests of things to pray for together.

Jesus, there are so many people around us who need to know the forgiveness, grace, comfort, and peace found only in relationship with You. We would be honored to be part of helping them see You. May Your Spirit be upon us. Send us out to proclaim the good news to the poor and freedom for the prisoners, to bring sight to the blind and speak of Your favor. May the Scriptures be fulfilled in the world as Christ works in and through us. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

