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Ten Excuses

And how to respond to those trying to dodge the Great Commission.

by Mark Mittelberg

It isn't hard to find reasons to avoid reaching out to others with the good news of Jesus Christ. Here is how I respond to ten common objections.

1. "I don't have any non-Christian friends." Jesus was a friend of sinners. We need to take risks to follow his example.

2. "I don't have the gift of evangelism. It's not my thing." Jesus gave the Great Commission to the entire church. We all have a vital part to play by using approaches that fit our unique personalities.

3. "I don't have time right now." Mix outreach with things you're already doing by inviting unchurched friends to join you. Think of the difference one lunch made in the life of Zacchaeus!

4. "I'm afraid of what friends will think of me." That's a good sign you're sensitive enough to approach people in ways that won't unnecessarily offend them! If you interact respectfully, they'll likely be open.

5. "I'll just live out my faith in front of my friends; they'll figure it out." That sounds appealing, but it's neither biblical nor effective. Paraphrasing Romans 10:14, they're not going to see it unless we also say it.

6. "I don't know how to bring up the topic." Pray for wisdom and courage to seize split-second opportunities to steer ordinary topics, like getting a drink of water (John 4), into spiritual conversations ("I could have given you living water").

7. "I wouldn't know what to say once the topic was raised." That's okay because it's best to do more listening at first anyway. Once you're into it, you'll find experiences to explore, questions to discuss, and stories to tell—and the Holy Spirit will guide you!

8. "I don't know enough." The best way to grow in this area is simply to dive in and say what you do know. You can always delay answering a tough question until you've had time to look into it.

9. "In our church's tradition, we don't talk about personal faith." Your friends need to understand the gospel message because it's "the power of God for salvation." Stretch yourself to communicate it in ways that fit you, and them—maybe writing letters or sending books or tapes. Take small steps, and it'll become more natural.

10. "My church is more into teaching and worship than evangelism." Don't excuse negligence of one area because we have competence in another. For the sake of lost people who matter to God, let's do all we can to reach them, personally and through the church.



Originally published in Leadership journal, July 1, 1998.

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