

WHAT IS This SERVANTHOOD EVANGELISM Anyway?

Servanthood Evangelism Defined

Servanthood evangelism involves intentionally sharing Christ by modeling biblical servanthood. It is the simplest, most transferable, and yes, most fun approach for moving believers closer to a biblical lifestyle marked by consistent witnessing.

Servanthood Evangelism Described

Servanthood evangelism is a combination of simple acts of kindness and intentional personal evangelism. The concept is as old as the New Testament. Like many profound truths, this one is so simple it is easily missed: Get a group of believers, say for instance at a local church, and begin practicing simple acts of kindness with an intentional aim toward evangelism. In many cases, such acts of kindness open the door for the greatest act of kindness a Christian can give: the GOSPEL.

Understand what kindness means. It does not mean telling people what they want to hear so they will feel good about themselves. Servanthood evangelism involves more than mere acts of kindness. There are valuable ministries, such as taking a loaf of bread to newcomers, and others, which are helpful, but they are not explicitly evangelistic. Servanthood evangelism is intentionally evangelistic, though by no means does it seek to coerce in a negative sense. When doing an act of kindness, the witness says, "I am doing this to show the love of Jesus in a practical way." Then, as the Holy Spirit opens the door, usually through the individual responding "why are you doing this or that," the one performing the act of servanthood has a captive audience and proceeds to share their conversion testimony coupled with the gospel presentation. If the other person is not open for discussion, the witness goes no further, except to offer a gospel tract, literature, or prayer. However, experience reveals that servanthood evangelism allows a presentation of Christ more than twice as often as simply presenting Christ to a stranger. Think about it, wouldn't it be a cruel gesture to offer to wash someone's car and fail to tell them about the Water of life? To give a light bulb without telling of the Light of the world? To clean a toilet without telling about the only One who can cleanse a person's heart from sin?

For example, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N. C., uses this approach in its personal

evangelism classes. Part of class is used as a laboratory with the students venturing out in small groups to evangelize. Some students have chosen to purchase sodas and give them to passers-by in the town's business district. Others go door-to-door in older communities with 9-volt batteries to check residents' smoke detectors. One student doing this was able to lead a person to Christ for the first time in his life-was he ever excited! Another group may have a free car wash (FREE-no money accepted) at a local church, mall, grocery store, or the parking lot of a department store such as Wal-Mart or K-Mart. Patrons will usually try to give money, but the students refuse. Their response is always, "We're simply showing the love of Christ in a practical way." At one of the car washes, a man from a Hindu background was saved.

Keep in mind, servanthood evangelism means intentionally sharing Christ by modeling biblical servanthood.

Some believers have gone door-to-door, giving away free light bulbs: "You'll probably have a light bulb go out sometime, so here's one," they say. "By the way, did you know that Jesus said He is the light of the world? It is amazing to see how responsive people become as the result of a simple gift or act of servanthood.

The same testimonies can be multiplied one-hundredfold across America and the world by congregations, student ministries, denominational agencies, youth groups, and many others who have adopted servanthood evangelism as a mode of intentionally sowing and reaping the gospel seed. Whether feeding quarters into a washing machine at a Laundromat™ to share the gospel, washing car windshields at the mall, giving away coffee or sodas at local stores, going door-to-door with packages of microwave popcorn with the note attached "Pop in and see us sometime," or providing free gift wrapping for a local store at Christmas, servanthood evangelism provides an effective approach to intentionally share one's faith in today's contemporary culture.

Above explanation was taken directly from the newly revised and updated version of the Servanthood Evangelism Manual, by David Wheeler & Alvin Reid, NAMB, 1999 & 2004. The manual has hundreds of creative SE ideas and is available through the North American Mission Board.