



This week, we continue our *RockStar: Making HIM Famous* series with *Entourage*, a discussion about who we surround ourselves with.

Throughout this series, we will be focusing our Growth Groups discussions on the Journey Church “invest and invite” strategy. Therefore, our goal for this week is to talk about surrounding ourselves with people that can influence others to make Jesus famous.

- **Do you know of any famous musicians that mentor those younger than them in the industry?**
- **Can you think of any famous musicians who developed their career out of the “entourage” of another musician? Did their career carry on a tradition, add to it, or detract from it?**
- **READ: Philippians 4:9.**
 - **Do the things you say and the things you do generally “teach” the same things? Why/Why not?**
 - **If the people around you practiced what they see in you, would that draw them closer to Jesus? Why/Why not?**
 - **What adjustments can you make to your life to make what people see line up with your claims?**
- **READ: 2 Timothy 2:1-2.**
 - **What does this passage teach us about the people we should investing in and surrounding ourselves with?**
 - **How are you preparing the people around you to influence others?**
- **Who’s “entourage” are you in? Who is investing in you to prepare you for greater things?**
- **Describe your “entourage” of people around you that you are investing in to bring closer to Jesus.**



Hey Growth Group Leaders!

As you prepare for this weeks' Growth Group Meeting, I highly suggest reviewing the article I provided with your Travel Guide last week. I have again included it at the end of the Travel Guide for those of you who missed it last week. This article will help remind you of our goals in the *invest and invite* strategy here at Journey Church. As you read the article, if you have any questions or comments, please let me or Eric know.

With that being said, let's jump into this weeks' discussion with the *invest and invite* strategy at the forefront of our minds . . .

God bless!
Andrew

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Throughout this series, we will be focusing our Growth Groups discussions on the Journey Church "invest and invite" strategy. Therefore, our goal for this week is to talk about surrounding ourselves with people that can influence others to make Jesus famous.

Stemming from our "RockStar" theme, the first 2 questions are ice-breakers that will help focus your group on the idea of influence and investing in others. Have some fun with them, but don't dwell too long. I went ahead and threw in a couple of examples with my opinions. Don't use them unless you get stuck. Try to use your own examples.

- **Do you know of any famous musicians that mentor those younger than them in the industry?**

Try to have an example ready. Try to have a *good* example ready. The one that came to my mind quickly was the influence that Madonna had on Britney Spears. Some of Britney's ability to perform and shock the crowd came from Madonna's influence . . . many of Britney's other antics . . . well, that's another discussion . . .

- **Can you think of any famous musicians who developed their career out of the "entourage" of another musician? Did their career carry on a tradition, add to it, or detract from it?**

There are several examples available for this. The most recent one may be news for some of your folks. Jordin Sparks was once a backup singer for Michael W. Smith. Shmitty isn't exactly my favorite musician, but I personally don't think Jordin has much of anything to offer to his legacy.

- READ: Philippians 4:9.
 - **Do the things you say and the things you do generally "teach" the same things? Why/Why not?**

Whenever we talk about our *invest and invite* strategy, we need to remind our folks that our actions are going to make at least as much of a difference as our words, if not more. Our culture has made a point, in theory, to separate beliefs from actions. However, in reality, our influence is dependent upon the two lining up.

- **If the people around you practiced what they see in you, would that draw them closer to Jesus? Why/Why not?**

This is really just a follow-up questions to again drive home the point that our actions will hold more influence with people than simple lip-service.

- **What adjustments can you make to your life to make what people see line up with your claims?**

Challenge your folks to think seriously about their claims about Jesus and how their lives reflect those claims. Personally, I have claimed to be sold out to this **invest and invite** strategy, but have not been great at investing in people around me. Recently, Emily and I have begun making some adjustments to our lifestyle to open up more doors to get to know people around us more personally to open a door to invite them to Jesus and the church.

- READ: *2 Timothy 2:1-2*.
 - **What does this passage teach us about the people we should investing in and surrounding ourselves with?**

One of the key elements to the **invest and invite** strategy is reproducibility. As we invest in folks around us, we need to be turning around to encourage them to invest in someone else. As we seek to reproduce Christ-followers who will reproduce more Christ-followers, the influence will grow exponentially, and we will change the world.

- **How are you preparing the people around you to influence others?**

Jesus invested in the lives of his disciples and prepared them to influence others. They in turn influenced other who would carry on the message of the Gospel. The process has continued for 2000 years, which has brought us here today . . . someone invested in someone who invested in us. What are we doing to ensure that the spiritual legacy won't stop with you or the people around you?

- **Who's "entourage" are you in? Who is investing in you to prepare you for greater things?**

Timothy was in Paul's entourage. We all need someone a few steps ahead of us to encourage us and to challenge us to rise to the next level. Who is challenging you?

- **Describe your "entourage" of people around you that you are investing in to bring closer to Jesus.**

Finally, challenge your folks to take seriously the **invest and invite** strategy by developing a network of people to influence for Jesus. If your folks don't really have an "entourage" of disconnected folks, review some of the ideas from last week that will help them develop that network of influence for the Kingdom of God.

Can We Do That: by Andy Stanley and Ed Young

Section One Reaching Out

Invest and Invite - Andy Stanley

We partner with our regular attenders to reach the unchurched.

At North Point Community Church, our evangelism strategy is summed up in two words: invest and invite. From the very beginning, we've told our people that our desire is to partner with them in the process of evangelism. As I am fond of saying, "We will do what you are afraid or unequipped to do: raise the issues. You do what we cannot do: invite your friends." As a result of this partnership, we see a high percentage of our people participating in personal evangelism. Over 90 percent of the adults we baptize came to NPCC at the invitation of a friend.

Fear and Ignorance

Let's face it, fear and ignorance are the two primary obstacles to personal evangelism. When I was growing up, leaders addressed these problems through training and motivation. In the 1970s and '80s, several excellent evangelism-training programs were developed to help believers overcome their fear and ignorance. Pastors preached compelling messages about reaching the lost and the need for all of us to personally embrace the Great Commission.

For some -- primarily those with the gift of evangelism -- it took. But most of us simply had to face the fact that we were cowards. We just could not bring ourselves to whip out a tract and present the gospel to our neighbors and friends. We accepted the fact that our Christian experience would include a measure of guilt regarding our lack of concern for the lost. Investing in Lives

North Point's invest-and-invite strategy has made it safe for hundreds of seasoned but scared believers to get back into the game. Instead of training our people in the art of personal evangelism, we instruct them to invest in the lives of unbelievers with the express purpose of inviting them to an event where they will be exposed to the gospel in a clear, creative, and compelling manner. Is there a need for training? Yes. But our strategy is not dependent upon training. It is dependent upon purposeful relationships.

Believers are responsible for leveraging their relational influence for the sake of the kingdom of God. That's the part they can do that we -- the church -- can't. I have gone so far as to tell our folks that if they are not willing to leverage their influence for the kingdom, they are attending the wrong church. I don't want to raise money and build buildings so we can seat more note-takers. Our mission is to lead people into a growing relationship with Christ. We operate off the premise that all regular attenders have embraced that mission as their own.

They are not responsible for knowing the answers to every question their unbelieving friends may throw their way. But they are responsible for exposing them to an environment where they will be presented with the gospel. Anybody can do that, assuming there is a church close by that is designed with the unchurched in mind.

Extending an Invitation

What we have discovered (and we certainly aren't the first) is that far more personal evangelism takes place if believers feel the freedom to invite their unbelieving friends to church. It is easier to invite people to an event than it is to confront them about their personal belief system. It is easier to include them in on something you are excited about than it is to convince them that their entire worldview is incorrect.

While we do not do "seeker services," we do design our weekend services with the "investee" in mind. We assume that every Sunday morning hundreds of our people are going to show up with that friend, neighbor, or family member with whom they have been cultivating a relationship. Often people will introduce me to their guest and, without saying it directly, let me know that this is their investee. What they are really saying is, "I finally got 'em here. Don't blow it for me!" The Eye of the Beholder

Our goal for our unchurched guests is to create a comfortable environment where they are confronted with the intensely practical nature of the Scripture. I want them to leave thinking, "I didn't know that was in there. That was actually helpful."

Evangelism is a process. Establishing the relevance of the Bible is often a necessary precursor to convincing people of its divine source. Our church is inundated with people who have not yet put their faith in Christ for salvation but whose lives are slowly being transformed by the application of God's Word.

Exposing unbelievers to the relevance of Scripture is something the church can do a better job of than the individual believer. This is why partnership evangelism is so effective. Back to You

At the end of our worship services, we place the responsibility of evangelism squarely on the shoulders of our people. I do this as conspicuously as possible. I say things like, "If you have any questions about what you have heard this morning, ask the person who invited

you. They will do a far better job explaining it than I did." Or, "The person who invited you this morning would love to discuss this with you over lunch."

On several occasions members have come up to me before a service and asked me to make one of those statements. They were looking for an opportunity -- an opening -- to take the conversation with their investee to a new level. They understood what it meant to partner with the church in evangelism. Less Is More

One other advantage of our invest-and-invite strategy is that it is an easy plan to communicate. It is not seven steps or five steps; it is two words. Everybody in our church knows what I am talking about when I refer to our invest-and-invite strategy. And everybody knows whether or not they are on board with us.

In our elders meetings, we keep up with and pray for each other's investees. The same is true in our staff meetings. Leaders (including staff) know that on the Sunday their investee shows up, they are released from their normal ministry duties. Their responsibility on that Sunday is to navigate their friend through a morning at NPCC and then go have lunch.

Every church needs an evangelism strategy that the members understand and embrace. Our invest-and-invite strategy is easy to communicate and easy to apply. More importantly, it reflects one of the first instances of evangelism in the New Testament. When Andrew discovered Jesus' true identity, the Bible says he went and found his brother Peter, and "he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:42).

The church is the body of Christ. Bringing the unchurched in among the body is the next best thing to bringing them to the person of Jesus.

Ed's Take:

Like Andy, I believe the role of evangelism is a non-negotiable in the local church. Every church should have as part of its purpose a statement about evangelism. One of our stated purposes at Fellowship Church is "to reach out and share the good news of Jesus Christ." Unfortunately, churches often fall victim to the naval-gazing principle; when left on their own, they turn inward and become a holy huddle with an "us four and no more" mentality.

One of the primary responsibilities of the senior pastor and staff is to keep the church focused on evangelism. Many churches teach the importance of reaching out but fail miserably in modeling evangelism to the church. I recognize that it is difficult for church staff to witness and invite people to come to church because we spend most of our time around church people. When I started Fellowship, I decided early on that I would spend a good deal of my time around people who were not Christians. Wherever I go -- the health club, restaurants, the theater, sporting events, etc. -- I constantly invite people I meet to attend Fellowship Church. I tell them about how Christ can change their lives.

We hold our staff accountable for the contacts they have with unchurched people. Often in staff meetings, I will go around the room and ask staff members to report on who they are spending time with. If staff members are not talking to people who are hell-bound, then something's out of balance in their schedule and priorities.

A Tag-Team Event

Not only do I encourage our staff to share the good news of Christ, I regularly challenge the congregation to invite their friends, family, and coworkers to Fellowship. I promise our regular attendees that if they will invite someone to Fellowship, we will make sure that the moment their friend or family member pulls into the parking lot, he or she will feel comfortable and welcome. More importantly, we will make sure that all visitors hear that God created them, Christ died for them, and He is the only way to eternity in heaven.

I tell our congregation that evangelism is a tag-team event. It takes both the staff and the congregation to work together to get people to visit our church.

A healthy church should have a mixture of three groups of people attending: those who have not stepped over the line of faith, those who have just made a faith reception, and those who are mature in their faith. If everyone is a mature believer, you are not doing the Great Commission. Conversely, if the church is full of baby believers, you are not discipling.

I've also discovered that the best way to market the church is through word-of-mouth advertising. Our surveys indicate that 98 percent of the people who attend FC showed up for the first time because someone invited them. If you have a church that is creative, relevant, and exciting to attend, people will invite their friends -- that's a given. If your church is boring and irrelevant, you can have evangelism classes 24/7 and it won't matter. People will not invite others to a boring church.