

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

5 Practices for Blessing & Reaching People Outside the Church

Episode 180

Practical Ways to Love Your Neighbor and Change The World With Dave Ferguson

Many churches have a hard time mobilizing their congregations to develop meaningful relationships with people outside the faith and outside the church.

Friendship is foundational for successfully inviting people into a faith conversation. But how do you build those relationships and what does that look like on a practical day-to-day basis?

Dave Ferguson joins this week's episode to share a few tangible practices that your church can use to love your neighbors and change the world based on the life of Jesus and the practices He used.

The Five Practices

- **Begin with Prayer -**
Prayer is how Jesus started His earthly ministry. It's how you *do* the mission and how you *discover* your mission.
- **Listen -**
One of the main pillars of a successful relationship is actively listening to the other person. Barna research indicates more than six in 10 non-Christians and lapsed Christians say they would be open to talking about faith matters with someone who listens without judgment.
- **Eat -**
Taking the time to break bread together and share meals together is one of the best ways to connect with your neighbors.
- **Serve -**
Serving is closely tied to listening. If you're engaging and listening with your friends and neighbors, they'll tell you how to serve them.
- **Story -**
There's nothing more relevant than a friend's experience, so as your friendship develops, you'll have the opportunity to share your faith and your story.

Why Should Our Church Do This?

- God's plan was to bless us and then we get to be a blessing to other people. That's how we flourish. (See [Genesis 12](#).)
- The BLESS model is a better way to build quality relationships with people.
- It takes the weight off your shoulders. It's not your job to convert anybody. The Holy Spirit's job to convict. Your job is to just bless and love your neighbors.

Implementing BLESS at Your Church

- As the Lead Pastor, you are a culture creator and you want to mobilize your congregation to go out and bless their neighbors.
- Culture is created by:
 - **Values** - Most churches have these scriptural values
 - **Narrative** (language & story) - Most churches need to work on defining this
 - **Behaviors** (practices) - Practical ways to implement those values
- As the pastor, adoption needs to start with you, your staff and key leaders. Then you teach it to the congregation and have it become part of your church culture.
- As this becomes part of your culture, share stories of the lives changed by these practices.
- Measure discipleship:
 - **Celebrate** - your relationship with God
 - **Connect** - your relationship with the church
 - **Contribute** - your relationship with the world

Next Steps

- [Download the free teaching series on the B.L.E.S.S. practices](#)
- Pick up a copy of Dave Ferguson's new book [B.L.E.S.S.: 5 Everyday Ways to Love Your Neighbor and Change the World](#)
- [Barna Research](#) What Non-Christians Want from Faith Conversations
- The definition of the [Innovation Curve](#)

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