

Relationships.....

Besides building community the most important aspect of multihousing church planting is building/maintaining relationships. The multihousing industry is a microcosm of society and as such there are Christian and non-Christians who are the gate-keepers of the vast numbers of multihousing communities in North America. We will not penetrate the multihousing mission field without relationships within the industry. Nehemiah is an excellent biblical example of building relationship credibility within various circles of influence. In effect we are stewards of the relationships we have. We must recognize we are responsible for how we treat others even if they are difficult or treat us wrongly.

When a pre-existing relationship does not exist, the first encounter with multihousing manager(s) should always be brief with the knowledge that you will follow-up. What does the first visit with the manager entail? It is a simple introduction of yourself and the church ending with a request for how you/church can pray for the manager. The prayer needs should be taken to the church and a card mailed to the manager letting them know you/church have prayed for them. From the very beginning you want to gently establish that you want genuine partnership and are unapologetically "the church". Follow-up from the first visit should take place within 10-14 days. This second visit should be short also.

Then What ???

What to do in relationship building:

- ?? Pray regularly (privately and publicly for wisdom)
- ?? Do your homework on the industry and the specific ownership or management group.
- ?? Brief visits (including encouragement visits) are best.
- ?? Give positive body language.
- ?? Present positive cultural sensitivity.
- ?? Communicate at the person's or group's level. (Not too high or too low)
- ?? Meet at the owner's/manager's convenience as much as possible.
- ?? Come across as comfortable. (even if you are uneasy)
- ?? Listen for information and insight during conversations.
- ?? Observe non-verbals (Much is said without speaking)
- ?? Expect the unexpected, i.e. be prepared to answer questions and be prepared to defend your faith and possibly Southern Baptists in a loving diplomatic way.

What not to do in Relationship Building:

- ?? Monopolize conversation. Seek to hear then to be heard.
- ?? Press for meetings the 1st week or last week of the month.
- ?? Assume the person's or group's political preference.
- ?? Make jokes, especially those with racial or cultural overtones.
- ?? Come across as overly critical, i.e. pessimistic.
- ?? Assume the person's religious position.
- ?? Condemn other faiths/religions.
- ?? Sound like a know it all, particularly about the person's work in the multihousing industry.
- ?? Make promises you are unable to keep.

Dressing for Success in Building Relationships:

- ?? First impressions really are lasting impressions.
- ?? It is easier to apologize for over dressing than try to compensate for under dressing.
- ?? Business casual is different than recreational casual.
- ?? Dress for the occasion (when in doubt dress up but not flashy).
- ?? Dress conservatively.
- ?? Dress neatly.

Events and Groups That Provide Opportunities for Initiating Ongoing Relationships Relevant to Multihousing Church Planting:

Remember Positive community visibility always helps. When opportunities arise to serve as one time/temporary or ongoing chaplain for a group/association it should be done.

- ?? Baptist Association Meetings
- ?? Pastors Conferences
- ?? Management Association meetings
- ?? Landlord Association meetings
- ?? Area Realtors Association meetings
- ?? City Council/Board of Commissioners meetings
- ?? Informational and Public meetings/hearings.
- ?? Serving on board(s) of local non-profit agencies (including local public housing authorities)
- ?? Joining Chamber of Commerce
- ?? Rotary Club or local Jaycees Meetings
- ?? Professional associations
- ?? Fraternity or sorority meetings