



It's Personal

Introduction

Inviting others to experience the love of Jesus through the local church isn't about growing an organization—it's about impacting lives.

1. Have you ever been invited to something that changed your life in some way? (A job opportunity, a new friend group, a fitness program, etc.)
2. What was your first experience attending **Access Church**? Did anything stand out to you?

Discussion Questions

1. *Why Another Church?*

- Rich was asked, “*Did Jacksonville really need another church?*” How would you answer that question?
- What makes a church “needed” or “effective” in a community?

2. *The Story of Mike & Kate*

- **Mike & Kate's** fictional (but realistic) journey highlights the struggles people face in finding a church home. What stood out to you in their story?
- Have you ever felt like church was confusing, irrelevant, or intimidating? What changed that for you?
- Rich emphasized that rather than saying “*You should try our church,*” the best invitation is “**Come sit with me.**” Why do you think a personal invitation makes such a difference?
- Have you ever invited someone to church? What happened?

3. *Church Begins in the Parking Lot*

- The message pointed out that before Rich even starts preaching, guests have already had **a sermon preached to them**—through the way they are welcomed. Have you ever had a first impression of a place (positive or negative) that shaped your experience?
- How do you think our church does at making people feel welcome? What can we do better?

4. *Jesus & the Feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21)*

- **Read Matthew 14:13-21** (the feeding of the 5,000).
- Why do you think Jesus told the disciples, “**You give them something to eat**”?
- What does this story teach us about trusting God with our **small offerings**?

- Rich pointed out that many in the crowd probably had food but didn't offer it. Only one boy stepped forward.
What are some things you might be "holding back" from offering to God?
- How can we take a step of faith like the boy with the loaves and fish?

5. *Serving in the Church*

- **Derrick and Laura** shared their journey of hesitantly stepping into serving but finding fulfillment and joy. If you are currently serving, what have you learned from it?
- If you're not yet serving, what holds you back?
- How does serving make church feel more personal?

Practical Application

- Think of someone in your life who might be like **Mike & Kate**—searching for hope but not sure where to turn. How can you invite them to experience church personally?
- This week, consider saying, "**Come sit with me.**"
- Consider ways to **serve** in the church.
- Where do you feel God nudging you to step up?
- What's one next step you can take to use your time or gifts for God's kingdom?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

- Pray for the courage to **invite others** and to **step into serving where God is calling.**
- Ask God to help our church continue to be a place where people feel **welcomed, valued, and loved.**