

The Art of Being an Inviter

By Craig Duck – President/Missionary FCFInternational retired lieutenant with 28 years' experience from Washington, DC and current volunteer firefighter in Boydton, Virginia.



“Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

John 1:45-46 ESV

Are you an inviter? The Bible calls Christian firefighters and first responders to invite others to have a relationship with God. Even though we live in a day and age when social media has taken center stage in the lives of people, we are still called upon to actively and intentionally invite others to ministry events. Perhaps the reason why our local groups aren't thriving like they were years ago is because we have lost our zeal to share what is happening with the Fellowship of Christian Firefighters with others. The art of being an inviter involves making personal invitations, learning how to search for people, and being willing to step out of our comfort zone.

Look at how excited Philip was to invite Nathanael to meet the Messiah. He dropped everything to let Nathanael know what he had discovered. Without this personal invitation, Nathanael might have missed this opportunity. Philip had taken the time to personally invite Nathanael because he believed it was worth meeting the Savior. When we fail to invite fellow firefighters and first responders to our local group gatherings, Bible studies, or local church services they just might totally miss an opportunity to know Christ. Being an inviter takes real commitment to the Lord and should be looked at as a duty of every Christian.

There is power in a personal invitation.

Don't be fooled by all the social media hype. We may get thousands of likes on a post, have many more friends on a certain platform, or get comments on just how good we write, and yet fail to have meaningful relationships.

People may be more connected through social media today than ever before, but statistics show that more people are lonelier than previous generations.

A survey by the Harris Poll showed that almost three quarters (72%) of Americans experience loneliness.

The Bible calls us to faithfully meet with other believers to help each other grow in their faith. *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching”* (Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV). When was the last time you invited someone to church, a Bible study, or a Fellowship of Christian Firefighter event?

According to a LifeWay Research conducted several years ago of 15,000 adults, 67% said a personal invitation from a family member or friend would be effective in getting them to visit a church.

At times on the fireground incident commanders will meet “face to face” with officers to ensure the tactics and strategies are carried out as planned. A personal “face to face” meeting will ensure that the task is heard and understood. A simple point of the hand can let the company officer know what door the chief expects you to enter or what hillside needs protection. When one person tries to explain situations or instructions over the radio, mistakes can be made.

A personal invitation to an FCFInternational event ensures that people are receiving your message. Your excitement, facial expressions, and plea are more likely to be heard than a simple post on a social media platform. When was the last time you invited someone to one of your events? We must learn to be intentional in our relationships and build relationships that turn people to Christ. Remember our vision statement?

Vision Statement – To glorify God in the fire service by building relationships that turn firefighters and first responders hearts and minds toward Christ (Philippians 2:11), equipping them to serve Him (Ephesians 4:12).

Philip was an inviter, are you?



Learning how to search for people

Jesus was the master of the personal invitation. Read through the Gospels and see how He invited people. John chapter 1 gives us some insight into this process. Jesus sought out those who needed to hear from God. How often do we pray for God to open our eyes to those who need to hear the Gospel message? There are people walking around your department who don't know God. A simple invitation to a Bible study can change a life. Learn how to search for those people.

- Pray for people in your department, especially those who need to hear the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.
- Listen to conversations and try to identify those who do not regularly go to church.
- Engage in the lives of those in your station and discover who needs encouragement.
- Find those who are wandering around without hope, those who are trying to put on a mask to tell everyone else that all is well.

Stepping out of our comfort zone

Far too often in life, we enjoy living in a state of comfort. We set up routines, become comfortable, and just do the minimum to succeed. Remember we teach the principle to firefighters and first responders that complacency kills. Have we become complacent in our local groups? Is that what God wants from us? Are we choosing to live a life far below our potential?

“And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them.” Isaiah 42:16 ESV

When was the last time you decided to do something big for God? While inviting someone to a local Bible study doesn't seem big, in reality, it is. Edward Kimball was bold enough to share his faith with a young kid named Dwight L. Moody. Moody went on to do great things for God. But what would it have been like if Kimball was comfortable just making shoes? The world would never have had the Moody Institute, and thousands, if not millions, of lives, would not have been impacted.

Go ahead and step out of the boat and make a personal invitation to a local Bible study, FCFInternational event, or your local church.

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9 ESV

We have so much to be thankful for in the Fellowship of Christian Firefighters. But there is more work to be done. Christian firefighters and first responders need to become bold in their faith by making personal invitations, searching out those who need to hear the Gospel message and stepping out of our comfort zone. Then we just might see real revival in the fire service.

Who will you invite to your next fellowship event?

