

# Organising Visiting Teams

At times, the local church may host visiting teams or seminars of various kinds, from outreach music groups to parenting seminars. These visits are usually most effective when organised in partnership with other churches and groups. Such collaboration can encourage the participating churches, lead people to Christ, and strengthen unity within the Body of Christ, provided it does not encourage people to move from one church to another.

It is especially frustrating for a visiting team to arrive and find that arrangements are poorly organised. In the same way, church administrators can become discouraged when administrative standards fall below those normally expected in the wider community. Pastors and other leaders should therefore work closely with gifted administrators in the church and be willing to delegate where needed. When programmes are organised well, they inspire confidence and create a sense of expectation.

## Planning and procedure

1. Once an invitation has been extended and accepted, find out exactly what is required to organise the visit and write it down. Record all dates in your planning calendar.
2. Inform all participating churches about the visit at least two months before the team arrives. Write to them and include the dates of the visit.
  - a. Include any available publicity material and references. If you have videos about the group, distribute those as well.
  - b. Mention any requirements for churches that want to be involved, such as billeting, counsellors, and financial support.
  - c. Let them know that you will contact them again in one month to confirm their interest and commitment.
3. One month before the visit, send another letter or phone each church to confirm its interest and commitment. If a church is interested, record the contact person's name and follow up promptly with details about any requirements, such as billeting and the need for counsellors.
  - a. Encourage each church to publicise the visit well, especially in its newsletter. Send a sample notice if that would help.
4. Two weeks before the event, contact all church coordinators and record the names of counsellors and those who have committed to billeting. Arrange extra people as backups in case anyone withdraws at the last moment.

5. Throughout the preparation, cover the event in prayer and ask God to work powerfully through the visit. Many churches have been transformed through such occasions.

## **On arrival of the team**

1. Be there to welcome the team warmly and serve them with a willing heart.
2. Prepare a detailed list of billets and hosts for every team member, including addresses and phone numbers. This will help if people need to contact or visit one another.
3. Provide each host with a letter explaining exactly what is required, such as where and when billets should meet, and whether they need to bring a packed lunch.

## **After the visit**

1. Send a letter of appreciation and, if possible, include a monetary gift. Encourage the team in its ministry.
2. If necessary, point out weaknesses, but do so constructively.
3. Follow up on any matters that need attention. For example, counsellors may need to follow up with new converts, and outstanding accounts may need to be paid.
4. Do not hesitate to evaluate the team's ministry again three or six months later. This may be helpful if you are considering inviting the group back.