



worldoutreach
SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP

SERIES FIVE
MODULE TWO:
VISITATION SKILLS



Outline Session 1

1. Visitation Skills

SESSION ONE: VISITATION SKILLS

Going to visit someone in their home, workplace or in hospital is incredibly meaningful for the person being visited. Visitation is a skill. So, in this session, we'll provide some practical tips for visiting people.

1. Make contact before you visit someone

The visit begins with your first contact either by phone, text or email signalling your desire to visit. Explain why you're coming to visit, unless of course, it is obvious (like the person is bereaved, in hospital or in crisis). Be very clear in the *purpose* of the visit.

It's also important to confirm the visit either the night before or the day of the visit. Do a little research on the person you're visiting so you know their need or story.

2. Spiritual preparation

Prior to going on the visit, prepare spiritually. How?

A. By praying before you go for things like:

- Spiritual strength and foresight
- Correct attitude and frame of mind
- Wisdom and tact
- About the purpose of the visit to be successful
- For the person to be ministered to during the visit
- About the right approach to make
- That the Holy Spirit will prepare the way and the person's heart
- For the right Scripture verses may be used

B. By Exercising faith

- Visitors should go in faith, believing to see the Spirit's wisdom and power manifest to the life of the person visited
- The Lord will give strength and wisdom, so draw confidence from this

3. Making impressive contacts

Someone has well said there are no second chances at first impressions.

So, it is important to...

- Bring a warm greeting
- Be confident and alert
- Use their name frequently
- If it's not clear, explain why are visiting them
- Show a genuine interest
- Brush your teeth or take a mint
- Accept gestures of hospitality, like offers of tea, coffee or water

4. Guide the conversation

Once the initial formalities and greetings are over, guide the conversation, as follows:

- Ask about them; don't talk about you
- Try and identify with them
- Encourage conversation by asking open-ended questions and listen attentively and actively
- Be patient with obstacles to communication
- At an appropriate time, smoothly and naturally transition the person to speak about the true nature of why you are there
- Ask questions which lead the person in the direction you're wanting to head in
- Anticipate and answer questions

Avoid arguments and being drawn into controversial topics. Never raise your voice. Build faith into people by turning their attention to the Lord, his word, power, presence and grace. Depend on the Holy Spirit.

5. Develop listening skills

While you're with the person, listen attentively and actively. Here are a few quick tips:

- Be attentive and interested
- Listen from the 'ok' mode, which means allowing the person to bounce ideas and feelings off you while you assume a non-judgmental, non-critical, yet empathetic manner
- Act like a mirror, reflecting back what you think the other is feeling and/or saying
- Indicate you are listening by encouragement and non-committal acknowledgment, such as head nodding, facial expression, body expression that is relaxed and open, and eye contact
- Don't interrupt or take the subject into a different direction
- Let the person share their heart, their need, their problem or their question

6. Respond with the Scriptures and wise words

Bring an appropriate Biblical response to whatever the need or topic may be.

7. Pray before leaving

When you sense the purpose of the visit has been achieved, or it's time to go, here are some thoughts about how to conclude the visit.

- A. *Pray an appropriate prayer*
- B. *Read an appropriate Scripture, one appropriate to their need*
- C. Leave a blessing (for example the priestly blessing in Numbers 6:22-27)
'May the LORD bless you and protect you. May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. May the LORD show his favour and give you his peace.'

8. Follow up

If there are any concerns from your visit (for example, their health, living conditions, change in behaviour, signs of neglect, abuse, or danger of domestic violence), speak to the appropriate people in your church and/or the authorities.

9. Guidelines & practicalities

- A. Define the purpose of the visit beforehand – know *why* you're visiting
- B. Be sensitive to protocol if it is a hospital visit
- C. Never visit someone of the opposite sex alone – always take someone of the same gender as the person being visited
- D. Don't make visits too long
- E. Appearance and dress code should be appropriate to your context
- F. Avoid time-wasters
- G. Keep a record of the visit (who, when, where and why)
- H. Keep details of the visit confidential unless it is of a serious pastoral or legal nature, but pass on any relevant information to the appropriate person on the pastoral team
- I. If you're new to ministry leadership, shadow an experienced pastor to watch and listen to the skills he or she displays. It can be an invaluable way to learn pastoral skills.