

# "AS YOU GO" EVANGELISM

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I really believe it was done with the best of intentions. I also believe that it used to work. In the 1960s through the 1980s we would meet at the church building at 7 P.M. on Mondays, Tuesdays or Thursdays. We would be given a list of names by organizers. Then, in groups of two or three, we would dutifully go to these homes one by one. Yes, we often found people watching television, eating dinner or just spending time with their families. Back then, they didn't seem to mind a visit by people from church. In fact, some of them really appreciated it. How and then you would find one who seemed bothered or "put out" that these "church people" would intrude on our time with our families. But for the most part, the visits were pleasant and often resulted in people obeying the gospel or souls returning to the fold.

Something changed in the nineties. Americans became busier, and family time became more scarce. Also, crime increased to the point that most families have at least one member who has been a victim. Home invasions were talked about on the news. Rapes, robberies and murders increased. People became more and more suspicious of strangers arriving at their doors. In fact entire towns passed ordinances against door to door campaigns of any type.

Ceasing to evangelize is not an option with New Testament Christians. We "cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." We must evangelize, because of the commission given by our Lord ( See Mark 16:15-16 and Matthew 28:18-20) . Therefore, as we have done for 2000 years, we must adjust our methods of evangelism so that they will be more effective in the time period in which we now live.

In Acts chapters 7 & 8 we read about severe persecution in the church at Jerusalem. " Church people" were not welcome there either. In fact they were being murdered for preaching about Jesus

What they did though, can serve as an example for us in the increasingly hostile, anti-Christian, environment of the United States today. Simply stated in Acts 8:4 " Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. The same idea is expressed in Matthew 28:19, " Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations... "

There it is! The answer to our problem of people not wanting to be bothered with " church people" intruding on their family time. In order to meet the requirements of the great commission without causing hard feelings about the church, why don't we all begin to practice " as you go" evangelism? Why don't we " preach the word everywhere we go" ?

Think about where the members of the Lord's church go on an average day. To a restaurant, to the grocery store, to the neighborhood hangout, to the Senior Citizens Center, to lunch with friends or family, to the nursing home or the hospital to visit. Even those who stay at home are not isolated. Repairmen come to our homes. Service providers such as delivery and pick up people come to our homes. In the words of the apostle Paul, " No man lives or dies unto himself." Since this is the case, is it not feasible to " preach the word" as we go through our lives? Does it not make as much sense to " evangelize as you go" as it does to " go and evangel" ?

It is my prayer, that the rest of this and all of next year will be the year that we as Christians, start practicing "as you go" evangelism. It will work if we give it a chance. It worked for the first century church, and it will work for the 21st century church as well!