When our chief apostle and writer Paul told us all to “pursue love,” he knew we needed to do that because it would not come to us. We must go after it, and make it a strong chase.

Love is “righteous action to meet the needs of others,” not feelings. Read I Corinthians 13 and you see deliberate actions, actions pastors must model, as we represent our Lord and point to God’s consistent and amazing love.

So this month we go a bit “touchy-feely” after last month’s more objective ideas about church boards.

The three of us and our CE National partners hope you are in this chase with us!

10 Ways to Show Love From the Pulpit

Jeff Bogue
1 Teach in a relational way, demonstrating that you are empathic to the needs of your congregation. You care.
2 Pray for the congregation publically.
3 Pray for individuals publically if the need is well known—as in a tragic death or critical illness.
4 Celebrate together as a congregation.
   • Big wins
   • People accepting Christ
5 Express pride in certain groups.
   • “I am so proud of our teenagers…”
   • “I am so proud of the way you all responded to the community work day…”
6 Express gratitude for their support of you.
   • “Heidi and I were on vacation last weekend, and we thank you for letting us get away—you all are so generous to our family!”
7 On very special occasions, stop the service to celebrate.
   • We had a gentleman who turned 100 years old
   • 50th wedding anniversary
   • Acceptance into a military academy
   • Soldier returning home
8 Teach about Jesus’ love for the church...yours will spill out.
9 Inspire them with vision and encouragement.
   • We can be too quick to rebuke or correct and point out problems...remember to encourage!
10 Say “I LOVE YOU!”—a lot!

Jim Brown

1 Feel their pain.
   • Before I step into the pulpit I pray and ask God to let me feel the pain of the passage and the people I am preaching to. I try my hardest to take the events of
the week and tie them into a love-touched illustration.

2 Tell them you love them.
   - You can never articulate those words too often. Often, before I start a sermon I will tell them how blessed I feel to be their pastor and to be able to lead them.

3 Show the full scope of your emotions when you preach.
   - I do not hide my emotions. I want them to know that I love them enough to let them see me cry over a lost person that they are praying for.
   - Let them see your heart. Speak often from your heart and not just your head.

4 Celebrate with them and for them.
   - It is so easy to get onto the next big project plan and event without pausing to celebrate and thank God for what He did through them in the most recent activity.
   - Do a review video that highlights and reminds them of what they did. And say over and over again, "Thank you!"

5 Brag on them like a proud father does on his kids.
   - I often tell them that when I was with ministry colleagues I told them that I had “the best local church on planet earth.” Let them know that when you aren’t with them you are talking “good” about them. Doesn’t everyone want to know that you brag on him or her when you don’t have to?

6 Speak the truth from God’s Word, shamelessly.
   - I tell my people this all the time: “I love you too much not to tell you the truth!” The best thing a pastor can do to love his people is to tell them the truth, even if it hurts.

7 Cover the hard stuff from God’s Word and challenge them to grow.
   - When you really love someone you don’t run from the hard conversations. You are willing to tell them
that they have areas they can grow in and are falling short in.

8 Don’t harbor resentment or wrongs against them
   • Never preach out of unresolved anger. Don’t preach mad. Way too many pastors are angry when they preach and use the pulpit to scold their people instead of forgiving them and moving on. Just take a look at your face on video once in a while; there are some angry-scary pastors out there.
   • Love keeps no record of wrongs.

9 Work hard at being the best preacher you can be.
   • Never give less than your best.
   • Be the most creative, diligent, illustrative, deliverer of
   • God’s Word they have ever heard.
   • Let them see that you want to do the absolute best in your preparation and delivery of the Word. When you really love someone you give your very best so that they are proud of you and would be willing to invite a friend back next week to listen to you preach.

10 Keep Jesus the center of every message and the center of your personal life.
   • When I spend time with Jesus I become more like Jesus and love drips from my life. And the closer I get to Jesus the more I love others better.

Knute Larson

1 Say, “I love you” often, adding “and so does our staff” at least every 4-6 weeks. Even if you are Swedish!
2 Mix and greet before and after services—the one day the whole churches come to where you are, do not be hiding. (Teach the “three-minute rule” to leaders and volunteers; do not talk to people you know for three minutes after the service!)
3 No sarcasm!
4 Use, “We should do this...” not, “You should do this....” Do not talk down to people or at them, but as one of them.
5 Speak with warm love about your wife, others churches, the board, minorities, etc. See Galatians 5:15.
6 Be personal and vulnerable, appropriately admitting your own struggles. Speak out from behind the pulpit at times, telling how you need our Lord. Do not always be the winner.
7 Emphasize the love and grace of God. He really does care about these people, and we get to convey that.
8 Give hope. The Bible does! A survey at one excellent pastor-teacher’s church as to why they appreciate his sermons: “He is one of us, and he gives hope.”
9 Smile at appropriate times—warm good news, about God’s grace, humorous breaks or illustrations.
10 Smile more. 😊

10 Ways to Help People Through the Programs of the Church

Jeff Bogue

1 Always treat people as individuals, not as groups.
   - Not, “How do we reach millennials?”... Rather, “How do we serve Andy, who happens to be 20 years old?”
2 Approach ministries as “needs based,” instead of “age based”
   - Parenting classes
   - New believers’ classes
   - Financial classes
People at every age and stage have needs and offer value... be careful not to isolate them from each other.
3 Offer “Recovery” seminars.
• Divorce Recovery
• Abortion Recovery (we call ours “Surrendering the Secret.”)

4 Ask your people what programs would help them.
5 Survey the community and ask them how “a church” could best serve them.
6 Build “Biblical communities,” not “classes.”
   • An environment in which people share their lives with each other, centered on the Bible.
     Example: Adult Bible Fellowships (Sunday and/or home), Life groups.
   • Lead them to relationships, not information.
   • Relationship with Christ.
   • Relationships with other people in the church.
     A Win=Relationship
7 Train your leaders.
   • Teach them to pray for those they lead.
   • Teach them to follow through.
   • Teach them to invest relationally.
     Leading is not dumping information... it is sharing life!
8 Assign new folks a “Tour Guide.”
   • Great relationship builder....
   • Helps them beat the learning curve
9 Make prayer a part of every program.
10 Feed your leaders and they will love your people.
   • Leaders generally volunteer to help, but they also run out of gas... encourage, pray for, and invest in them and they will “pastor” alongside of you. This gives your people a loving environment.

Jim Brown

1 Inform, inform, and then inform.
   • Use multiple people and forums to advertise the program.
2 Get a champion to lead the program.
• Make sure the leaders of the programs have vested interest or have unstoppable passion for it.

3 Do the program well.
• Do one thing well instead of many things not so well. No need to reproduce something that another local church is doing already. We work hard at a few things so that they are done with excellence.

4 Know your needs.
• Way too many churches are doing programs that have lost their relevance and impact.
• Kill programs that have lost effectiveness.

5 Value the people over the program.
• Personalize the program so that the people in it can see the end goal in mind and how that can best help, build, and strengthen them.
• When you lead the program, be sure not to rely only on the program and neglect the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

6 Timing is everything.
• Sync programs with sermon series.
• Offer the program at optimal times for participants.
• Offer child care if needed to show how you value the program.

7 Build men and women of God in the process.
• Make sure the program develops the best fully devoted follower of Christ possible so that the individual witnesses the change in his own life and then becomes the spokesperson for recruiting.
• If there isn’t good positive chatter taking place by individuals in it then it signals lack of effectiveness.

8 Offer programs that help individuals reach their redemptive potential.
• People are busy and do not desire programs that do not push them to become all that they can be.
• Quickly shoot down programs that are operating because “This is the way we have always done it!”

9 Show them how this will help them win.
• Buy-in comes when they can see the why.
• 10 Bathe, saturate, and birth the programs out of prayer
• Any program that succeeds is powered by prayer.

Knute Larson

1 Have support groups for certain needs.
People who have the same situations can really help each other—widows, single mothers, alcoholics and other addictions, people out of work, eating disorders, people struggling with same-sex attraction and more! One at a time, and with a very qualified person to lead it.

2 Build care into all the groups the church has—ABFs and Home ABFs, or whatever you call them.
A person or couple responsible to assign care is better than hoping it happens!

3 Have “huddles” with church leaders and strong volunteers two or three times a year—to thank them and celebrate God’s grace.

4 Have a good discipleship group with 4-6 men whom you can really love and build. And have fun with! And talk about love with!

5 Missing in a lot of churches I coach—have a strong Point Person on staff to lead and coordinate all five areas of assimilation of new people (with strong volunteer Ministry Managers caring for each of the five areas). (See “Assimilation: Helping Guests Become Family is not Automatic!” and “The Four Major Divisions of Church Ministry”)

6 Drop by the kid’s areas and the seniors programs when you can. Thank them and express the love of the church and staff!

7 Honor and love shut-ins with a Point Person on staff and a good program for their care and attention. (And then don’t be surprised how word gets around that they are grateful!)
8 Have “Parish Visitors” (that is what we called them, because people like titles and clear responsibilities) to help with shut-ins and hospital calling (in addition to staff); and strong and gracious and happy people to be weekend greeters and ushers. Most ushers can be taught to smile 😊

9 Learn “Straight Talk”! Confront or correct in a kind way any staff or volunteer who is hurting the love issues at the church! Jesus would.

10 Speaking of programs to change lives and build people—do not allow busy people, like staff, to rule on new ministries. Often they/we decide against them because we are too busy, and they are not for us! On the other hand, do not have or start or keep programs that just fill schedules and jam families’ schedules or keep traditions going.

10 Things to Remember When Loving People One-On-One

Jeff Bogue

1 In times of crisis, careful hugs are often more meaningful than words.
2 It is also loving to tell someone the truth—not all love feels good.
3 Turn your cell phone upside down when meeting with someone; give them your full attention.
   • Ignore all phone calls and text.
   • If you are expecting a call you must take, tell the person you are meeting ahead of time. (“I apologize, but I will have to accept this call when it comes in.”)
4 A handwritten card communicates personal concern and appreciation.
5 Send a sympathy card to the loved one on the first anniversary of a death—most people will not remember the anniversary.
6 If you cannot respond to a real need in person, call immediately.
7 “First come, first serve” in the lobby.
   • Don’t break eye contact with the person you are talking with, even if the other person “hates to interrupt”
   • *Exception is the person who wants to monopolize your time.*
8 If she is under 10 or over 70, give her a hug. All others receive a warm handshake.
9 Stop **right then** and pray with a person when there is that need.
10 Be “in the snapshot.”
   • *Bob Combs taught me this one:* When people have defining moments in their lives, they take mental snapshots. The pastor wants to be in the background of that photo. Not the center of attention, but most certainly not absent.

*Jim Brown*

1 Be in the picture.
   • At special times in their lives make sure your face is in the photo when they go back to that moment in the future.
   • An email, a note, a phone call or your actual presence—all mean a lot.
   • Never assume they know you prayed for them—tell them that you did!
2 Make them feel like they are the most important person at that moment.
   • Don’t interrupt them when they are talking.
   • Be “quick to listen and slow to speak.”
• Turn off your mobile devices and don’t look at your social media...nothing worse than someone checking Facebook or Twitter when you are baring your soul!

3 Show appropriate affection.
• I don’t front hug women unless she is my grandma. Use a side hug.
• (I don’t travel with a woman of the opposite sex alone in my vehicle.)
• Shake their hand in an appropriate way.

4 Celebrate their big moments.
• I send a birthday greeting to every single Facebook friend that I know from Grace Community and pray for them on their birthday.

5 Pray for and with them.
• Instead of saying, “I will pray for you,” do it immediately.
• At the end of each day I ask the Holy Spirit to cover all the prayers that I promised to do for people, some of which I may have forgotten.

6 Love them enough to tell them the truth.
• Don’t be afraid to confront them in love when they are on a wrong path.
• Tell them the hard stuff. Do not agree with their unbiblical assumptions.
• Don’t give them permission to do something that God would never want them to do. I often tell them that they need to ask the Holy Spirit to direct them concerning tough marriage situations.

7 Regularly build them up with your words of encouragement
• Our words carry life and death.
• “Encourage” means to put “courage in to someone.”
• Season your words with salt and life!
• Send texts and FB messages.
  -Comment on their post by praying for them.
  -Speak their love language.

8 Remember that they will disappoint you.
• They are not perfect, of course. Be willing to extend grace and mercy, and be ready when needed to begin a restoration process with them.

9 Love them regardless of how they can help you, or whether they can.
• Love everyone the same.
• Don’t love people only if they can do something for you.
• No partiality, for all are equal in our Lord’s sight.

10 Celebrate their uniqueness.
• Allow them to be the persons God wants them to become, not the persons you want them to become.

Knute Larson

1 No sarcasm.
2 Speak eye to eye with kids or people in wheel chairs, so that means getting down on one knee sometimes. (I was always amazed at how many people walked past people in wheel chairs or with special needs, without greeting and loving.)
3 Listen! Pay attention! If you did not get it (like their name) ask them to repeat it.
   The world’s best church coach ever, Lyle Schaller, said, “In a large group, lead; in a small group, listen.”
4 Never do a “Topper” (see Dilbert cartoon comic strip in your newspaper) or a “That’s nothin’”—where what they say reminds you of your own story, and you top theirs. This is a repeat of #3 to make a point.
   Only astronauts are allowed to do this, as one comedian demonstrated on You Tube: “That’s nothing’, I was on the moon once” (when people were telling travel stories).
5 Ask questions of them other than, “How are you?” and listen for the answer. (This is a repeat of #3 and #4.)
6 Greet people no one else will on Sundays and at meetings and in restaurants. And they are there!—Over there, standing alone.

7 Close emails or phone calls with appreciation of something specific. “I love the way you serve others.” “You are such a vital part of this church and our mood.” “Your work and mood on the board are so encouraging to all of us.” “I love the way you treat your mother!” (to your own children)

8 Smile. Look in the eye. Pay attention.

9 Care about their kids or grandkids who are with them. Notice and talk to them—see #2. Even their dog, if out where dogs are. Except for Pit Bulls.

10 Smile again. 😊

Pastorpedia is produced monthly by three experienced pastors: Jeff Bogue, of Grace Church, in several locations in the Bath-Norton-Medina areas of Ohio; Jim Brown, of Grace Community Church in Goshen, Indiana, a church known for its strong growth, family and men’s ministries, and community response teams; and Knute Larson, a coach of pastors, who previously led The Chapel in Akron for 26 years. Pastorpedia is brought to you by CE National. Visit cenational.org/pastorpedia for more issues and to read the bios of our contributors.