

TALKING POINTS

EXTERNALLY FOCUSED -

LEANING IN

If we're not careful, we can treat the Church the same way we treat a consumer's organization. We can come to church asking ourselves, "what's in it for me?" We can become internally focused, fighting a never-ending battle where we judge based our own needs and whether the church *perfectly* satisfies them.

The truth is, as a church, we exist for people who *aren't here yet*. People of all backgrounds, views and walks of life. People who are loved and people who are "unlovable". The *whole* world. Because we are called to reach the world for Jesus, this purpose is constantly before us and drives how we do things. To accomplish this goal we must maintain an external focus.

It starts with seeing the "church" the right way - the way Jesus intended us to be. Not a critical, consuming *audience* who sits back and does little else but judge. Instead, an active, engaged body of *servants* who love like Jesus and serve others (even "difficult" people). Jesus' mercy and His concern are with those who are far from God - outside the walls of the church. Our concern should mirror His.

Read Matthew 18:12-14, Matthew 20:28, Mark 2:15-17

How do we make the change from a "what's in it for me" to an external focus?

LIVING IT OUT

Because our purpose as a church is for the benefit of others - especially those who are not here yet, here are four keys to being Externally Focused we can learn from the character of Jesus:

Jesus Reached Out To The Broken - in Jesus' time, the poor and destitute were largely ignored and left to suffer. Jesus deliberately reached out to them.

Read Luke 14:12-14

How can we better reach out to those who are in more difficulty than us?

Jesus Reached Out To All Races And Cultures - Jesus reached out to not only the Jews, but people of all different races and cultures, even ones the Jews despised, like the Samaritans, Canaanites and even the Romans.

Read Matthew 15:21-28, John 4:7-26

How can we model Jesus in reaching out to those of different races and cultures?

Jesus Reached Out To Women - women in Jesus' day were treated like second class citizens, more like property than people. Jesus reached out to them, honored them and engaged them significantly in His ministry.

Read Matthew 26:6-13, Luke 8:1-3, Galatians 3:28,

What can we learn from Jesus' view of women?

Jesus Reached Out To All Ideologies - from fishermen, to a hated collaborator of the Roman Government (tax collector), to a Roman Centurion, Jesus reached out to everyone on the political and ideological spectrum.

Read Matthew 9:9-13, Matthew 8:5-11

How can we better "imitate Christ" to those whose views we oppose?