



GROW WIDE

GROW WIDE: EXTEND YOUR REACH!

SEPTEMBER 10:	OUR WELCOME TO ALL
SEPTEMBER 17:	OUR WELCOME OF THE OUTCAST
SEPTEMBER 24:	OUR WELCOME TO THE CROWD
OCTOBER 1:	SPREADING OUR WELCOME

It's easy for churches (and church people) to fall into society's sinful trap of family v. strangers, members v. nonmembers, inside v. outside. Sometimes we think of church as our private club, where members employ workers and reap benefits, and new people have to fit in before they can be welcomed. Even when we invite people in, and God sends them, we may be afraid of "too many" new ones!

But Jesus was very clear: it's his church, he does the inviting and calling, and those who accept his invitation work for him. His church must be big enough for all. So, if not exclusivity and ease, what are the benefits of membership? Abundant life, deep peace, extravagant joy, soul freedom, beloved community... and an intimate relationship with God that changes everything.

PRAY DAILY

Jesus, my savior, my teacher, my friend: when I am in need, when I feel broken, when I feel lost, you call me to you. You open your arms, enfold me in, and soothe my soul. With you, I am chosen, called, welcomed. Break down my arrogance and greed — the stuff that makes me want to be unique in my relationship with you. You and our church have enough room and love to go around. Help me to open the door for others who need you, even more than I do. Amen.

READ AND REFLECT ON THE BIBLE — SCRIPTURES FROM THIS SERIES

Romans 1:16-17; 3:22-24; 8:1-2 — Jesus' followers are equally sinful & equally saved
Matthew 9:9-13 — Jesus invites the lost and outcast; his followers throw the party
Luke 14:12-14 — Jesus' followers should welcome those who cannot repay; God will repay
Matthew 9:35-38 — There are a lot of lost and outcast, and Jesus needs all of us to help
Matthew 10:5-10, 16-20 — We are sent out, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to gather all those Jesus invites

Questions to consider as you pray and study:

- § Who are our "outcast people"? Why are they outside the circles of love and care?
- § When in your life have you felt yourself to be "outside"?
- § How did you get through it? Who helped?
- § Who needs Jesus today?
- § How can we who are already "inside" reach out to these people more effectively?
- § Will you ask God to overcome your fear of the change that comes with new people?

OUR CHALLENGE — TO GROW OUR WELCOME WIDER THAN WE CAN IMAGINE: KIN(G)DOM-SIZED