

A Welcoming Church

Getting started

1. Using a scale of 1-10 (1 – not welcoming; 10 –welcoming), share with the rest of the group how welcoming you think we are at Ashfield Presbyterian Church?

This year, one of things we want to be growing at as a church is how we welcome and connect people to Ashfield Presbyterian Church, its people, and ultimately, to Jesus. It is everyone's responsibility to welcome. In our home groups, we'll be thinking together about:

1. **Why** should we be welcoming
2. **How** can we welcome others better

Not welcomed by the world, welcomed by God

2. Have you ever been excluded or left out? If so, share with the rest of the group how you felt.

Read 1 Peter 1:1-2

3. Who is Peter writing this letter to?

Read 1 Peter 2:4-12

4. How does Peter describe the recipients of his letter in 1 Peter 2:11?

5. How else does Peter describe them in 1 Peter 2:9-10?

6. Keeping this in mind, what should shape and motivate how Christians relate to outsiders and people who are excluded?

7. Are there any other possible motivations to welcome outsiders? Discuss.

Christians live in the world as outsiders, because they do not belong to the world. Christians are also people who have been included and welcomed by God and belong to him. If you're a Christian, then you have every reason to be welcoming because God has included you into his people, through Jesus Christ. God wants to welcome others into his people, so that they too will declare his praises to the world. Our attitude to outsiders and how we welcome reveals how much we've understood and been gripped by how God has welcomed us. But how can we welcome others better? How do we relate to outsiders and people who are excluded at Ashfield Presbyterian Church?

We welcome because we've been welcomed

8. Share with your home group some ways we could be more welcoming to newcomers, visitors and regulars, because God has welcomed us.

- Church
- Home group
- Family and friends
- On your own

9. What stops us from welcoming outsiders? Can you think of any things we could do to overcome these obstacles to welcoming?

10. What are some things you've talked about today that you've never thought to do to welcome someone new?

11. To finish, what are some things you can do personally and as a home group to welcome others? Be specific and decide on 1-2 things you could start doing.