

Where Are the Fish?

He was discouraged, to say the least! He had spent the entire day fishing without a single bite. He had bought all the latest equipment, got up before the crack of dawn, made certain he didn't make too much noise, had researched the best bait to use – and not a single bite! Maybe, he thought, the bathtub isn't the best place to fish.

Ridiculous? Of course! Who would fish in a bathtub and expect to catch anything, or even get a nibble? Yet, are we sometimes guilty of doing something similar in ministry?

Jesus called His disciples and said He would make them fishers of men. Our call is to use the “bait” of God's Word that the Holy Spirit might bring people to saving faith in Jesus Christ. But I wonder how many times we make a mistake as ridiculous as fishing in the bathtub—in other words, fishing where there aren't any fish?

Where are the “fish” in your community? Where do you find gatherings of unbelievers or unchurched individuals? The location will probably be different from community to community, yet if we open our eyes the Lord will help us to see the good fishing spots!



Pastor Jason Peterson

One pastor in Iowa District West, Pastor Jason Peterson, Burt, asked himself this question and saw the “pond” of the local racetrack in Algona. Every week during the summer hundreds of individuals, many of them unchurched, would gather for several hours. What if he went fishing there?

Talking with two of his members—one of whom was a driver and another who was a mechanic—he shared his thoughts. They in turn talked with the track promoter who gave him the green flag to have free access into the pits in exchange for saying a prayer at the pre-race meeting attended by 100-200 people!

Pastor Peterson was invited to say an opening prayer from the broadcast booth above the grandstand before the national anthem. After the prayer, he walks through the grandstand and makes his way to the other side of the track where he wanders through the pits, visiting with the drivers, mechanics and others that are present—establishing relationships along the way.

As a result of Pastor's racetrack ministry, he has made several hospital visits, engaged in counseling, and might even have an upcoming wedding.

Even more importantly, those at the racetrack—many of whom are unchurched—have seen him as a pastor who is an “everyday” guy who is interested in their activities.

When asked about the impact on his congregation, Pastor Peterson responded, “Those who are at the race track love it! Other mem-



bers of my congregation are seeing it as an example and thinking to themselves, ‘Maybe I should be doing something like this.’ ”

Although he has only done this for one season, Pastor Peterson has visions of offering a pre-race barbeque along with a devotional service. Anything I can do to set an example for our members to share their faith and establish relationships with people in our community is a blessing.

Seems to me that Pastor Peterson has some good company in going to places where the unchurched gather. When challenged, remember His response, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10). We don't have to save them, just seek them!

Perhaps you could sit down with others in your congregation and dialogue about where the good fishing spots might be in your community. How can you individually or as a congregation go fishing there? Let me know how the fishing goes!

Celebrating the Victory,

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