

Leadership Guide

Waco Baptist Church



Dear Leadership Team,

I'm excited to introduce you to *Becoming a Welcoming Church* by Tom Rainer, a book that I believe will inspire and challenge us as we reflect on our role in making our church a true home for everyone who walks through our doors. We know that the first impression visitors have of our church can often shape their whole experience of worship and connection within our congregation. Rainer's insights guide us in evaluating where we stand in our hospitality. As we go through this study together, you will receive a chapter-by-chapter guide for each session. Each guide is crafted to help you reflect on the reading, apply practical ideas, and discuss insights that can shape our future approaches. I've also included note pages with space for observations, questions, and feedback, so you can document your thoughts and ideas as we go.

Here's a brief overview of what to expect in the upcoming guides:

1. Chapter One: How Welcoming Is Your Church?

We will reflect on our church's current welcoming environment, identifying potential barriers that might make it difficult for newcomers to feel at ease. This chapter emphasizes the difference between a friendly church and a truly welcoming one.

2. Chapter Two: The Essentials of Hospitality

In this chapter, we'll look at practical and spiritual aspects of hospitality. We'll discuss what makes visitors feel valued and respected and explore ways we can improve in this area.

3. Chapter Three: The Power of First Impressions

Rainer dives into the critical moments that shape a visitor's first impression. We'll identify ways to enhance our church environment, focusing on greeters, signage, and facilities.

4. Chapter Four: Cultivating a Culture of Welcome

We'll explore how to build a welcoming culture that goes beyond the first visit. This chapter challenges us to think long-term about how we nurture relationships with newcomers.

5. Chapter Five: The Role of Leadership in Creating a Welcoming Environment

Here, we will reflect on our personal responsibility as leaders in fostering a welcoming atmosphere. We'll discuss ways we can encourage our teams to prioritize hospitality.

6. Chapter Six: Evaluating Our Progress

This chapter gives us the tools to assess our welcoming practices, make improvements, and celebrate our successes. We'll look at how to keep the momentum going and stay open to new ideas.

Please set aside some time each week to read the chapter and complete the Leadership Notes guide for that week. Each guide is designed to facilitate individual reflection and group discussion, with the aim of applying what we learn in real ways. I encourage you to bring any observations and ideas that come up during the study, and please don't hesitate to ask questions or share feedback at any time.

Thank you for joining me in this important journey. I'm looking forward to seeing how we can grow together in hospitality and welcome. May this process deepen our connection to God's call to love and serve those who enter our church family.

In Christ,

Pastor Andy Horton
Waco Baptist Church

Chapter 1 Leadership Notes: *How Welcoming Is Your Church?*

Section 1: Key Takeaways

Main Points

What are the most impactful insights from this chapter?
(Summarize two to three main ideas that stood out to you.)

Section 2: Self-Reflection

On a scale of 1-10, how welcoming do you believe our church currently is?
Why did you choose that rating?

Rating: _____

Explanation: _____

What is one barrier we might have that could make newcomers feel less comfortable?

Section 3: Discussion Notes

What do you believe makes a church "welcoming" rather than just "friendly"?

Section 4: Practical Applications & Observations

Visitor's Walk-Through Observations

As you completed the visitor walk-through, what were three areas you noticed that could be confusing or unwelcoming to a newcomer?

Facility Improvement Suggestions

Based on Chapter 1 and your observations, what improvements would you suggest?

Section 5: Feedback for Implementation

What is one thing you personally commit to doing this month to make our church more welcoming?

Closing Prayer Points

- Pray that we as a church would have open hearts for visitors.
- Ask God to reveal ways we can better reflect His love to all who come through our doors.

Chapter 2 Notes Page: "The Essentials of Hospitality"

Section 1: Key Takeaways

Main Points

What are the most impactful insights from this chapter?

Section 2: Reflection

In what ways do we already excel at hospitality?

What one area do you feel needs the most improvement?

Describe a time when you felt genuinely welcomed in a new environment. What made it feel that way?

Section 3: Practical Applications

Personal Action

What can I personally do to contribute to a more welcoming environment this week?

Chapter 3 Notes Page: "The Power of First Impressions"

Section 1: Key Takeaways

Main Points

Section 2: Reflection

What aspects of our facility do you think make a positive first impression?

Are there any aspects of our facility that could be improved to create a more welcoming atmosphere?

What was one memorable first impression you had at another church or organization?

Section 3: Practical Applications

Facility Improvements Needed

Personal Contribution

What can I do this month to enhance the first impression of our church?

Chapter 4 Notes Page: "Cultivating a Culture of Welcome"

Section 1: Key Takeaways

Main Points

Section 2: Reflection

How can we engage our entire church community in welcoming newcomers?

What practices could we put in place to help visitors feel part of our community?

Section 3: Practical Applications

Church-Wide Initiatives

Personal Role

What will I commit to doing this month to foster a culture of welcome?

Chapter 5 Notes Page: "The Role of Leadership in Creating a Welcoming Environment"

Section 1: Key Takeaways

Main Points

Section 2: Reflection

How can I personally model a welcoming attitude for others?

What support or resources do we need to make our hospitality efforts more effective?

Section 3: Practical Applications

Leadership Goals

What are two actions we as leaders can take to support a welcoming culture?

Personal Action Plan

What specific action will I take to help lead our church in welcoming others?

Chapter 6 Notes Page: "Evaluating Our Progress"

Section 1: Key Takeaways

Main Points

Section 2: Reflection

What has been our greatest success in welcoming others this year?

What area could use the most improvement based on recent feedback?

Section 3: Practical Applications

What commitment will I make to help evaluate and enhance our welcoming efforts?
