

## **Making the First Move**

**When you are introduced to your newcomer partner, be ready to make the next move. Consider these approaches:**

- Get acquainted with the new member as soon as possible. An initial meeting before or after worship or an introductory phone call is a great place to begin. Or offer an invitation to have coffee or a meal in a comfortable setting free of distractions.
- If the newcomer joins the church before new member orientation, extend a warm greeting on the day he or she is received into membership and begin to introduce the new member to others in the congregation. New members are eager to know that others want them to feel at home.
- Visiting at home (with the newcomer's permission) will allow you to meet the whole family. You will find it helpful to know if there are other family members who are not planning to join.
- In the following weeks, continue to learn as much about the new member's interests and background as possible. Where does the newcomer need support and where might his or her gifts be used most effectively?

**The following are some suggestions for creating the atmosphere of a welcoming church home:**

- Offer to sit with the new member in worship and introduce him/her to others in the congregation.
- Invite the new member to Sunday school.
- Help the new member find a small group of particular interest and encourage participation. Plan to attend with him/her until other personal connections are made.
- Arrange for fellowship or a social outing with the new member other than on Sunday morning. Occasions to consider include Sunday brunch, lunch, a movie, dinner, dessert, a picnic, a concert, a brisk walk or some other type of physical activity, a Bible study.
- Remember the new member on special days, such as on birthdays and anniversaries.
- Share in celebrating the new member's joys and pray for concerns.

## Tips for the Fellowship Friend

**As a fellowship friend, be sure to . . .**

- serve as a Christian role model.
- contact the newcomer regularly to let him/her know they are important to God, the church, and you.
- follow through on any requests for information.
- keep the newcomer informed about important events at the church and invite him/her to attend.
- be attentive to the needs of the newcomer by being supportive and encouraging, even if he/she is proceeding cautiously about getting involved.
- remember that each person is at a different place in the *faith journey* and, therefore, has different needs.
- help the newcomer make connections where appropriate within the church.
- appreciate that each person has been blessed with unique gifts, and recognize that the newcomer's gifts and interests may not coincide with yours.
- continue all efforts in prayer!

**As a fellowship friend, try not to . . .**

- assume the newcomer feels comfortable in the church and does not need your friendship.
- assume the newcomer understands what a "*faith journey*" is. He/she may be a new Christian, and the concept of a *faith journey* may be foreign.
- assume the newcomer can use your familiar vocabulary to express his/her faith experience.
- assume that the newcomer is the only one who will benefit and grow from this special relationship!