

## GROW Lesson 5: Arrows In, Arrows Out



**Q: What are some examples of “Arrows In” ministries that your church has to offer?** Arrows In ministries take care of people inside the church. Bible studies, classes, small groups, children’s ministries and youth ministries, and other similar groups. There certainly will be some overlap of Arrows In/Arrows Out ministries, but it takes intentional effort for an Arrows In ministry to have an outward focus. **Ephesians 4:9-13** exhorts us to use our gifts to build up the Church so that we all may become mature in the faith. That is Arrows In ministry.

**Q: What are some examples of “Arrows Out” ministries that your church has to offer?** Arrows Out ministries focus on people outside of the church. These ministries might invite people into the church who don’t normally attend the church (i.e. a conference or a movie night, food/clothing pantry), but often will take church members outside of the four walls of the church. Meals on Wheels, homeless ministries, cleanup or improvement projects, evangelism, school supply giveaways, benevolence funds for random needs. It’s important to have a balance of both. People inside the church need to be spiritually fed and people outside of the church need to be reached with God’s love. The parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the treasure in a field remind us that God has a heart for those who are lost and need to be found. Arrows Out ministries seek out those who are blind and hungry so we can lead them to God.

**Q: Have you ever walked into a church and gotten the feeling that your presence was either unrecognized or unwanted?** First impressions are so important. Perhaps your first impression of your church was good or bad, but chances are that it was a memorable experience. It’s important to make people feel welcome not to impress them but to make them feel welcome, safe, and comfortable so that they can freely worship, heal, or take another step of faith towards God. Our job is to care; to care for people and to care about people. If we fail to do that in the Church, people may go to other places to find the fulfillment that their heart yearns for. Consider **Matthew 7:1-2**.

**Q: Is it wrong to judge people? Isn’t it wise to make good judgments? What is at the heart of Matthew 7:1-2** At the heart of this passage is self righteousness, specifically in this context directed towards the Pharisees but also pertaining to the heart of all people. We should not be hypocritical or arrogant or condescending in our judgments. That doesn’t mean, however, that we shouldn’t make a wise assessment (or judgment) of people or situations. We can just a person’s actions as unhealthy or unwise; to be ignorant of that would prevent us from loving them in the way that they need to be loved. We can love the sinner but hate the sin, but as we do we keep in mind **Romans 3:23** which teaches us that we are all sinners in need of God’s grace.

**Q: Look at Matthew 25:31-46. Who are the least of these in our society? Where do we find these people in our community?** This is not a “one-size-fits-all” answer. Every community has unique needs. The “least of these” are those who aren’t just physically hungry or thirsty or in need, though Jesus certainly had these people in mind. It includes anyone who is spiritually thirsty or hungry or in need of new life. This means that the least of these will be found not only in poverty stricken areas of your city, but also in corner offices, high rises, and those who have made it to the top only to realize that it is lonely, disappointing, and unfulfilling. So, we can start by meeting physical needs (because they are easy to identify), but we should always be looking for those with spiritual hunger (which are typically only noticed by those who intentionally watch for signs of spiritual emptiness).

**Q: Where do you typically encounter people outside of the church? How can we find more opportunities like this?** It's possible to spend all of our time with friends from church and it's great to have fellowship with other believers, but if we do that then we will be missing out on fulfilling what God has called us to do. We are called to be in the world, but not of it. (Look at **John 15:19; Luke 10:2-4**) We are sent into it, but we should not be corrupted by it. We don't just resist the devil, we are heaven's ambassadors who take God's love into the darkness. On the street, at the grocery store, on the bus, at school, at work, on a recreational sports team, at the library, at social events. The Church can be guilty of isolating itself by creating a safe bubble of connection. We need to not be so safe and risk our comfort to intentionally step into the lives of others.

**Q: Honest question: Do people drive you crazy? How do we genuinely love people when they do things that we find bothersome or live in a way that is contrary to the Bible?** We all have a sinful nature and we naturally make our own perspective the "norm" for the world we live in. In reality, we all fall far short of God's perspective. If we can see the world through God's eyes and experience it through His love, we will be able to lower ourselves to a place of humility that recognizes the inherent value of every one of God's created beings. Read and consider **Philippians 2:3-4**.

**Q: Do you have any creative ideas about how our church can do a better job of ministering to visitors, especially people who don't normally come to church?** There are several places in scripture that remind us to love our neighbor (i.e. **Mark 12:31**). Our neighbor might include the person who comes to church for the first time. If you have some good ideas, please share them with your pastoral staff or a ministry team leader! We are working together to make God and His Church attractive. Be prepared, however, to be a part of the solution! Do you need more greeters? Would you benefit from having coffee or snacks available before and after services? Is there a new ministry that could provide for a growing need? What about providing a gift to visitors or a process to follow up people who have recently attended for the first time? Maybe you could get the youth ministry involved? Maybe the children's ministry could make cards? Be creative and do what you can to make it happen!

**Q: Is there a particular need that you feel strongly about? Share the idea with your group and gather feedback. Is it a worthwhile effort? How will it bring glory to God? What would you need to do to get started?** This discussion isn't to give your pastor ideas on what he can do to improve the church; this is an opportunity for you to make God's Church more effective in reaching those who need someone to come along side of them and point them towards God. Seek some wise counsel and see what others think about your ideas. If the idea is good and the timing is right, God may be leading you to do something new! He is always looking for people who are willing to be used by Him. (2 Chr. 16:9a)

**Progress update on the Class Assignment:** Get connected to a ministry at church. Do you have a passion to minister to people in the church, or outside of the church? This "Arrows In/Arrows Out" idea may help you to find a ministry that fits your passions more specifically. If you don't have a place to serve, keep praying for God to make clear His will and how you can help. Look for opportunities to get your foot in the door to serve and to bless!

**Review Memory Verse:**

**1 Peter 4:10** - *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."*

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**