



EQUIPPING THE CHURCH FOR MINISTRY

College Acres is a relationship driven church where our people serve as the vehicle and driving force of our gospel witness. At College Acres, we encourage every home to be a gospel outpost, both to our families and to our guests. Hospitality is both an attitude of the heart and also a practice of the hand. It seeks to turn strangers into friends through acts of welcome and generosity. Throughout Scripture, God calls his people to show hospitality to strangers—orphans, foreigners, the poor, widows, and more. (*Deut. 10:18–19, 1 Pet. 4:9, Rom. 12:13 and 1 Tim. 3:2*)

The 21st-century church has cultivated highly sophisticated procedures and tools for evangelism (training sessions, online resources, manuals, programs, and methodologies). However, as we study scripture, we find that the home and personal connection served as a center for evangelism in the early expansion of Christianity. Therefore, at College Acres we seek to establish this as the primary focus of our outreach. Our vehicle for loving our community and getting to know others is not solely found in our programs, events, and calendars which if we are honest, usually make people busier. However, it is found in the authentic life and intentional ministry of our people who we pray are rubbing shoulders with others in our community with gospel intentionality, friendship, communication and care.

We at College Acres do not believe that events, programs, and calendar items are bad - we even partake in these ourselves, however, we simply do not make them our overall strategy, vehicle, and hope for reaching the lost. We prayerfully seek to see our people freed, equipped, and encouraged at bringing hope to others (go, tell, and serve) rather than simply seeking to have others always rallying around the church as a building (come and see). It is our prayer that each covenant member at College Acres understand that evangelism is the action and lifestyle of every believer, not just the church in name or a select few. If we are effective for God's glory in evangelism here at College Acres, it will be due to the strength of the witness of our people as a whole in everyday life. At College Acres, evangelism and outreach are not programs and events. Evangelism is the outright loving witness of our people through intentional lifestyles of care towards outsiders (in both word and deed) and those within the church. Again, as has already been stated, our prayer is that we never become so busy “doing” church at the expense of actually “being” the church.

Therefore, our Sunday services are more focused at encouraging, equipping, and feeding those in church membership to better grow in their own personal walk and witness for the glory of God with their community, rather than merely using our church services to be the draw and source of reaching others. This means our services are always aimed at being evangelistic, in that we always rejoice in and place the gospel at the forefront of all we speak and teach on Sunday. However, if we truly believe our people to be God’s purpose and design for reaching our neighbors with the gospel and in serving as the greatest source of true discipleship, then we must focus our attention on preparing those church members for the works of ministry in the gospel and knowledge of God’s Word (*Eph. 4:12-16*).