

**Bruce Johnston, Adventist Administrator:** (A survey of 204 individuals who joined an Adventist church over a period of 4-year period) 75.9% remained in the church and became active members. The real factor was whether they knew six or eight people in the church within the first six months of membership. Those who knew people stayed: those who do not, did not stay.”

**Dudley and Cummins** Surveys on 120 former members. Factors in leaving the church.

Lack of fellowship; dissatisfaction with worship and programming; feelings of frustration, relief, bitterness during process of leaving. Personal failure to keep church standards or teachings. Marital or family problems. Influence of other individuals. Conflict with pastors or other members.

**Marietta Church, James Cress, GC Ministerial – book ‘You can Keep them if you care’, pp. 84-86**

Why members drift away or become inactive

*Uncared for; indifference exhibited by church members; no friends, lack of fellowship, difficult to cross social barriers; uninvolved and not used in ministries.*

*No friends, no network of relationships; no support or low support from church members; no sense of belonging; visit personally encourage their return; invite them to come back; show genuine love, concern, care; make them feel wanted; initiate social interaction; invite them into members’ homes.*

Lonely in a crowd. A mother was surprised at her little boy’s answer about how he liked his first day of school. “I hated it,” he said. “They put me in a room full of kids all by myself.” Suddenly this new scholar had discovered that he could be lonely in a crowd.

What initially attracts newcomers to their congregation?

*We are a friendly, outgoing group; broad variety of programming and activities; dynamic, growing environment for young families.*

*Need to participate: those who join a church in which they do not participate soon feel that they have entered a lonely crowd. “Sitting on the bleachers is fine at ball games. At church, it is deadly. Christians who do not participate either vegetate or evacuate.” Herb Miller, How to build a magnetic church.*

What keeps new members involved in their congregation?

*Quality programming; friendship and fellowship opportunities; involved in church activities and ministries.*

Why do new Adventist transfers or leave Murietta church?

*No social interaction; cliques have impenetrable barriers; members not inclusive, do not invite new members home; feel unneeded.*

What can we do to keep and nurture new converts in our church?

*Elders provide more intentional spiritual guardianship; leaders invite new members into their homes; get new converts involved in group activities.*

Their discovery: *put legs on their beliefs and set them into action in the arena of daily life rather than keeping accurate understandings confined to the theoretical or hypothetical.*

What role can the Sabbath School ministries play in encouraging and inspiring members to be faithful, and avoid drop-outs and bringing non-members to the Lord.

Jesus Christ is our Example in attending Sabbath, as His custom was. Luke 4:16. Mark 6:34 – “And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things.”

EGW says, “The Sabbath School should be one of the greatest instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ.” TSS 20.