



Lewis Center  
for Church Leadership

# Leading Ideas

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## **Parking Lot Hospitality** by Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

Most churches give attention to welcoming newcomers to church once they reach the church doors. Often they will be welcomed by both greeters and ushers. An information booth is now common in many churches. “But the impression has already been made before visitors enter the building,” according to leaders at Impact Church in Atlanta, which gives external hospitality a high priority. The congregation seeks to create a “great first impression” every week, giving newcomers a first glimpse of what is in store for them at Impact Church from the moment they arrive.

In addition to making sure everyone is welcomed with a smile, parking lot hosts have assigned tasks that make coming to church easier for everyone. They coordinate and guide parking and monitor the availability of parking spaces. The external hospitality team’s assignment is to be there at the moment of need, whatever it may be, for those arriving for worship. Some people need help with packages, and when the weather is rainy or very cold, they may need special assistance to get from their cars to the church.

The Impact Church external hosting goes beyond the parking lot. Their job is to connect people who are “outside” the church with Christ, a task that goes well beyond handling parking. The leader of the parking team, Alan Jones, leads the church in an annual homeless initiative. The parking lot hosts also have a ministry to those who are walking past the church as the service is in progress. For many on the team, this way of serving has proved to be a far more comfortable entry into ministry than traditional church volunteer assignments. There are many opportunities to share God’s love with others.

For more information about Impact Church, a new church start in Atlanta, or to learn more about Impact resources, go to their website at [www.impactdoingchurchdifferently.org](http://www.impactdoingchurchdifferently.org). You may order from there CD resources about their ministry. The Rev. Olu Brown is pastor.

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