

Tony Miles, Superintendent of Westminster Central Hall, tells the story of when he was in Ministerial Training College one of his fellow students who lived on site had a doormat outside his front door. On the mat were the inviting words, 'Oh no, not you again!' I know there is a temptation to say that to ourselves sometimes!

Hospitality and welcome is a key Gospel imperative - in Romans 12.13 Paul writes, 'Contribute to the needs of God's people, and welcome strangers into your home.' It is really important to think carefully about the welcome we provide for people. It is quite difficult to walk through the doors of a Church for the first time. What are people seeing and experiencing when they make that brave act? Far too often I hear of random (and often unintended) comments that people make that cause upset.

Around the Circuit we are constantly in the position of welcoming newcomers into our buildings. Either to Sunday worship or to mid-week activities. How we do that reveals something of who we are. I once had a Church where a number of folks clearly thought that if they weren't seeing people in Sunday services then those people obviously weren't fully invested in what the Church was about - never mind the fact that those folks were attending a thriving Messy Church that met in the Church on a Thursday at 4pm.

In this Circuit we are offering a good quality of welcome to many - from Baby Banks to Messy Fun Churches, from open vigils on Friday nights to coffee mornings. Of course, we could always do more. The key thing to hold in our minds and hearts is the welcoming, hospitable heart of God and to treat everyone as if they were the most special of guests.

Paul

Resources

Don't forget **John Truscott** offers some really useful training notes at <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Alphabetical-index> - particularly pertinent is his *A test for your church's welcome*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlzxX9zAhqk&t=3s> - a video from the Methodist Church about warm hubs.