

„I heard that you stopped your Alpha Courses...” I say to a brother, who years ago enthusiastically told me how they used to do two Alpha courses a year and used to have five and sometimes up to ten non-believers there! „Somehow, in all the time, we didn't manage to get those people into our church. There are only a few left,” sighed the diligent initiator of this great ministry...

„And how did those people respond during Alpha?” I asked. “Just great: relationships were formed, they had real discoveries from the Bible, and some seemed to believe, or maybe they really did! But when Alpha ended, their regular contact with us mostly ended, even though we repeatedly invited them to the church and to various interesting events. What always surprised us the most was that some were happy to come to the next Alfa in half a year and some even took someone with them! But the chruch?! No way...”

Have you ever heard or said the phrase, “**we can't get them into the church?**” I hear it from a number of active Christians as they start ministering to unbelievers! The so-called **contacting activities** attract attention, and some non-believers experience a clear spiritual touch there. However, it is difficult to transfer people from these interesting meetings to our usual communities.

In that talk, I was caught by the note that some of the non-believers who did not come to the church were happy to attend the entire next run of the Alpha course! „It tells me that Alpha has become their family, I would even say their church!”.

„How would people probably respond if you announced a continuation after the end of the course? In the same environment (nice non-church room rented in the city), roughly the same small groups with people they got to know quite well in the meantime, ideally the same team (4 or 5 believers), maybe even the same type of food and so on. You would just have to keep bringing more relevant biblical content. But that won't be a problem for you, especially when the team learns to guide the Discovery, or the three-thirds type of meeting. Do you think those unbelieving people would continue to come?” “I think most of them would...” the brother organizer imagined possible development... “I'd like to try that!” I said. Sure, some have set aside time for a number of Alpha meetings and simply won't give more. But majority in that community perceived such a benefit that they would be happy to go further. – If it continued with the same main parameters that have kept them there until now.



### G03. Can't Get Them to Church?

Do you have similar experience that people come to contacting events, but you are not able to „get them into the church“? What do you do in such case?

Looking at these people from Alpha or from any regular contact service leads me to the conclusion that the community that meets there is actually **the foundation of a new church!** At that meeting, to some degree, there is God's word, there is sharing of Jesus and at least the preliminary steps of making disciples. There are close relationships and mutual service, there are leaders or servants, there is some form of celebration of Jesus, and gradually a way of communicating with Him. If such a group were to function in the long term, it would make sense that some important elements would be added.

For example, when someone accepts Jesus, after a reasonable explanation, an informal biblical baptism would be performed in that group. After a suitable explanation, a biblically simple reminder of Jesus' sacrifice could also be added. And after reading the relevant passages of Scripture, those people would discover biblical identity of this group, that **they are already a church!**

*Thank you, Jesus, for Your Word. Thanks for a sufficiently practical description of how Your beloved Church functioned then and how it can function today.*