

One more stylized experience of many believers when they bring new people to the Lord Jesus. A Christian family, let's call them „Long-Time“, lives in a village about 10 kilometers from their congregation, to which they regularly commute. Once they learned the basic principles of Discovery, they tried a series of informal meetings over God's Word with their neighbors, and after a few months, the middle-aged couple became believers. Let's give them the name „First“. What else could the Long-time believers do but invite the First family to their church in a nearby town – only about ten kilometers away. After the service, the Long-Time believers looked at the First with an unspoken question: „So what? How was it?!“ „Let's chat at our garden...“ they postponed their response.

I would be very interested in your tips, what remained in the Firsts' memory after the service. The Long-time and other believers in the congregation then accepted the Firsts' **apology** that commuting with three small children on Sunday morning really is not easy. They accepted an assurance that the Firsts would go to a small group with the Long-Times. When another village family believed around the Long-Times and Firsts – let's say „Seconds“ – the leaders in the town church began to develop an idea of starting the church **station** there! It was great!

However, the exact same story happens every now and then in a situation where Long-Time believers live not in a village 10 kilometers away, but in an apartment block 200 meters from the church building. Let's say that everything else is the same, including the fact that new Firsts really don't feel at home in our beautiful church and that they really don't see a reason to go there regularly even with children. What will be the response of the congregation now, when there is not a commute needed from a distance of 10 kilometers, but a walk of 200 meters? And what will be your response, your recommendation?

For clarity, imagine this version, including the fact that through the informal Discovery reading of the Word among the Long-Times in the same apartment building, the other family of Seconds will also believe. I'm not sure if anyone would think of setting up a branch in an apartment building 200 meters from the church! But I believe that it would be ideal for these new believers and for enhancing God's kingdom in general! I guess that the new independent community would help that around the Long-times, Firsts and Seconds also the „Thirds“ and „Fourth“ would believe.

We are gratefully aware of situations when the Firsts and Seconds willingly join the church!

That's great! But I'm looking for ways to help Firsts and Seconds, who often can't even express why our great religious services really don't mean anything to them. After all, other believers perceive them as blessed! So why should the entire church, which has dozens of satisfied believers, have to adapt to completely new people from outside?! I mean that very constructively and positively!

Long time ago, when we wanted to transform the classic church into a „breeding nest for new disciples“, and when we led there new believers from outside, we were doing a bit of violence to the traditional people of God! And at the same time, with displeasure we watched as the new ones we brought to the Lord simply **left** the church!

The Lord Jesus told us quite clearly: *No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins, leaks, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine is put into new wineskins, and both remain. And he who has tasted the old does not want the new, for he says: „The old is good.“* (Luke 5:37-39)

Notice Jesus' remark, *„The old wine is good!“* In our culture, the word „old“ is considered almost pejorative, but Jesus clearly says, *„The old is good„*! In the „old“ – that is, in the „old church“ – there is usually certain form of maturity, an anchor of beliefs, morality and other values collected in history.

In order not to spoil the „old“ and at the same time that the „new“ would no longer be „spilled“ so much, we went out to put new wine into new wineskins – that is, we started a new community, which I will tell you about in the next lesson.

*Lord Jesus, Your grace is greater than we can imagine...*