

# Extra Shot | Hospitality with Young People | Adam Wade

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Hospitality, youth, young adult, spiritual guidance, empathy mapping, mentor, welcoming, relationships, spiritual journey, safe space

## SPEAKERS

Adam Wade, Jim Trinkle, Unidentified Speaker, Blake Smith

### **Blake Smith** 00:29

Hey, Project Zion Podcast listeners. This is Blake Smith, and I want to welcome you to another episode in the extra shot series on hospitality. Recently, the Council of Presidents of 70 led a two-day session on hospitality in the Central Mission Center. The council has been gracious enough to allow us to air these presentations for you, our listeners. This episode is titled, "Hospitality with Young People," and was led by President of Seventy, Adam Wade.

### **Adam Wade** 00:59

Thanks for coming along, everyone. This is about hospitality to young people, and in the church nowadays, young people can range anywhere from 13 to about 45 so we'll dabble around in that area somewhere. What I'd like to do is to share a little bit, initially, about some thoughts with young adults and young people, and then go into a little bit of a practical thing that you can use and have a tool that you can go away with to perhaps help you be engaged in hospitality with young people. So that's the plan. I thought I'd start off by reading this scripture from Hebrews 13. "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers. But by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it." So, I like this scripture because I've met plenty of teenagers that I would definitely not consider angels, and so I also know that a number of them have turned out to be excellent World Church leaders as well. So I'm always conscious that we never really know who the person is that's standing in front of us. So, just to be mindful of being able to offer hospitality to anyone depend, not regarding what they look like or how they're dressed or how they present. And today, I want us to really consider what it is that young people are truly looking for, and this idea of, are they really looking for another friend, or are they looking for someone to be a spiritual guide for them? And so from my perspective, I actually think that young people nowadays are not looking for a friend. They're actually seeking mentors or spiritual leaders in their life, rather than just someone that's going to DM them on Insta. And if you don't know what that is, that proves that you shouldn't be friends with them. So what I think they're actually looking for is they're looking for ministers and fellow disciples to help them navigate life and to deal with some of the challenges of their faith. And so for me, hospitality to young people is about care, empathy and welcome. It's not about creating a close friendship, but it's a spiritual act of service. And so trying to understand their inner thoughts and their needs, we can be hospitable in a way that actually is then going to serve them without us being overly involved in their personal lives. And if I look at Jesus and what Jesus did in his ministry, I feel like he actually did this. It wasn't possible for him to be friends with

all of the people he interacted with, but instead, he welcomed them in and guided them, but he wasn't best buds with everyone that he went to. And it's quite an unusual thing, because in the church, oftentimes people will say, "Hello, friends," like sometimes, well, it's not saying that I don't like you, but I wouldn't say that we're friends. And when you look at the difference between potentially hospitality versus a friendship. So in hospitality, we're looking at serving others, providing care, creating a welcoming environment, showing compassion. But in a friendship, it's different, and where having an emotional closeness, a mutual sharing, is more personal time and mutual support outside of those structured environments. And so for me, it's, it's quite challenging, I think for us, because it saying, Well, if I say I don't want to be friends with you, it's almost. Like, well, what you don't care about me. Don't love me. No, I do, but we're disciples, and we can learn from one another and guide each other spiritually in what we're doing. And the example I have from this comes from my experience in Australia. I just wanted to share a short story with you in 2020 when we were about to go into the pandemic, a young adult lady, Emma, she gave me a call, and she said, Hey, would you be able to catch up with me for coffee? Yeah, sure. So I drove down, and I met her at a cafe down on the beach in Melbourne, and we sat down, and she said to me. I in Australia at that time, we had a number of floods, and then we had a number of bush fires, or it might have been another way around. We had a number of bush fires go through the country, and then we had a number of floods that followed up a couple of months later, and then the pandemic was about to hit. And she sat across the table from me and said, with the fires and the floods and the pandemic, is this what Revelation is talking about? And I went, this is a much larger conversation than we have time for this coffee shop, so we're about to go into lockdown. Why don't we jump on zoom on Tuesday night at 830 and we'll go one hour till 930 I'll tell you why that's important in a minute. We'll go exactly one hour, and we'll just talk about any questions you like. So I did a little bit of research. I sent a couple of links on the internet and a few different resources so that she could do some pre-reading. And I logged on to zoom, and three people turned up, and Emma said, I hope it's okay, but I was talking to Haley about this, and she thought it was really interesting, and wanted to come. And then I was talking to Kate, and she really wanted to come as well, like, it's fine. And so that night, we unpacked the book of Revelation. We talked about the articles we'd read, what we found interesting, and then at the end of the evening, we offered a short prayer, and we said, okay, next week, what do you want to talk about? I've always wanted to know more about the devil. Okay, that's what we're going to talk about. So again, Emma went away. She found a podcast. I found some resources. We post them again, and a couple of weeks later, all of a sudden, it was four people online, and someone they told someone else, oh, this is what we're doing. As you can see, that photo was taken a few months ago, and we're up to around an average of about 10 to 13 people online every Tuesday night. There's probably a core group of about 25 to 30 people that would connect on a regular basis. And we didn't know what to call it for the longest time. It was just Emma's group. Is actually what it was sort of colloquially known as but Emma and I were talking, it's like, what do we call it? And I'm like, why don't we call it Tuesday church? And she was like, it, is it really church? I'm like, we're deepening our discipleship. We're talking about theology. We offer prayer. At times, people have written hymns and sung hymns. We do spiritual practices. We look at scripture like, what about it is not church? And so that's where we've landed. It's like, yeah, that's now Tuesday church from this Emma was then at a point where she developed in her leadership skills, she then sort of took over the group, and has since then mentored two others to now take over the group as a result. And that's because Emma is not only doing Tuesday church, she's also doing Thursday church, which is she's going around to a member who's 96 years old and taking her in-laws with her, and someone else has joined

to have Thursday church over lunch at his house. And then she's also doing the bottom photo, which is the winter retreat, which is some of the people from the online Tuesday church gather in the winter at an Airbnb for a weekend of spiritual development and in fact, one of the guys he actually flew from Perth to be at that weekend retreat. Flying from Perth to Melbourne is like flying from Los Angeles to New York. That's how far away it is. But he really wanted to be there at that experience. And so, I share that as the example tonight, because for me, what it was, was actually sitting across the table from Emma and listening to what her needs were, listening to what her fears were, what she was concerned about, and just offering that space to be able to then say, well, maybe I can help talk to you about some of those things. Uh, and so that's what I want us to focus on and lead into. And a way we can do this is a tool that, because I like to give people some things that they can say, look, I can use this in my ministry and my discipleship. And so, I want to introduce it to this thing called empathy mapping. And it's a way that we can perhaps help us to understand people's thoughts, their feelings, their behaviors and needs, and I think it's a tool that can help us practice our true hospitality. So, it's a way of welcoming and guiding without necessarily having to form friendships with everyone, but us to play a role as a hospitable, spiritual guide for people that are looking for that in our life, and particularly for young people from their perspective. And so, to unpack what each of the different things are on the map, it's divided into these six different quadrants. And so, the first one is what they see. So, in this thing, it's to think about, what are the things that they're seeing around them? So, what are they seeing in their environment? What are they seeing their friends engaged in doing? What are the social influences that are impacting them? What they think. So, what are some of the conversations they're involved in? What's the advice that they're getting from family or friends, or what are some of the media messages that they're getting? What they say and do. So, what are they doing in public? What's their behavior? What are the things that they're saying? What are the things that they're wearing? What is expressed on their skin? What is expressed in their ears? What they feel. So, what are some of those things that are running through their head? What are some of their worries, their aspirations or their desires? Then we go into the bottom two sections, and one of them is the pain. So, the pains are, what are some of the struggles or the challenges that they might be facing, or the fears that they could be experiencing in their life? And then the gains. So, what are some of their motivations? What are some of their goals? What does success look like to them? So, to help us understand this map that we'll use in a moment. I thought I would use a scriptural example to begin with. So, let's look at the Bible. And I thought we'd choose this scripture because it's actually the only miracle outside of the resurrection that occurs in all four Gospels. That's just a little fun fact for you. And so, Jesus feeding the 5000 and I know that the number is skewed a little bit depending on the verse, but we'll just call it 5000. So, for me, Jesus showed hospitality by meeting people's needs. So, Jesus met the physical needs by providing food, and provided spiritual needs through teaching. Now I know that it's not possible that Jesus made a personal friendship which eat with each and every one of those people there, but as a spiritual guide, he offered compassion and guidance to all. And so, for us to play the role and perhaps think about how this plays out in our lives. I'm going to get us to do an example of how do you think someone in the crowd may have felt in that moment? So, I want you to imagine for a moment you are you, as you are now, in that crowd. You might have your family with you. You might have no one else with you. You are in that crowd on that side of the mountain, and you're going to go through this empathy map. So, what is it that you see? Well, you probably look around and go, there are 1000s of people here. It's dinner time. How on earth are we all going to be fed? You might be thinking, Will Jesus actually be able to provide for us? What are you feeling? Probably hunger, maybe a sense of hope, because you've

obviously journeyed there for a reason, or a sense of awe. What do you do? Well, you've followed the crowd. You've gone with all of these people to see Jesus. Some of the pains you might be feeling, you might be feeling, you might be feeling a bit frustrated because you're at the back and you can't see or you might be feeling a bit worried about how you might be fed, and the gains would be, well you're actually participating in this marvelous experience, miraculous experience. So that's the example of an empathy map in a scripture. If we now shift and think about today's world 2000 years later, and we think about an empathy map for a young person. So you can pick a young person anywhere from 13 to, like I said, around 40-45. What are some of the things that we might notice about them? So what do they see? What does a young person that you're envisioning see? They might be busy. They might have social media driven lives. If anyone's been watching Tyler, he's checked his phone about four times, and that's because he's in a conversation, because there's someone else that's expecting to get a response, right? So, you need to respond because you're in a conversation with someone, and so that's an important part for young people, is we think that they're being anti-social. They're actually being more social because they're having multiple conversations at the same time. They might have friends moving in out of jobs that they're worried about. There's fast-paced changes, and maybe there's a little stability in their life. Some of the things they might be thinking about, they might have messages about, what does it mean to be successful in my career. They might be facing mental health challenges, either their own personal mental health challenges or mental health challenges of friends. And they also might be getting pressure from family to settle down or to grow up or get a real job, things like that. Things they might say and do. Often, people will say, "I'm fine," but we can recognize that there's a subtle expression of stress in that moment. They're often busy sharing their thoughts, maybe not allowed, but maybe through social media. And can sometimes appear confident, but might be actually anxious. And in terms of what they feel, They could be privately worried about the future, feeling disconnected or unsure about what their purpose is in life, they might feel lonely, even though they are being connected online. Some of the pains they might be feeling, they could be under financial stress. They could be a fear of failure, or a pressure to fit in socially or meet expectations. And I feel like the pains and the gains are probably the two areas where they might be looking for the most spiritual guidance from us as ministers or as disciples. And, they may want meaningful relationships. So, ask lots of big questions to seek purpose and belonging, and that they would value authenticity in that experience. So, those are just some of the examples that I would highlight that you might meet when we're starting to think about how to be empathetic to someone sitting across from us. The other thing I will mention with young people, particularly teenagers, I often find that they do not like you sitting directly opposite them. They would much prefer to have a conversation with you sitting next to them. So imagine a park bench looking out of the park, and I think that's because in some ways, when you're sitting opposite them, they feel like what they're saying will be judged, so they're constantly checking and re-checking and watching your facial expression, whereas if you're just looking straight out, they're able to just freely chat and to share what is on their mind, because some of these things are really quite big questions for them in their life, if that's where we want to be able to provide hospitality and a safe space to invite them into. So what we're going to do now, I want you to think about a young person. I'm happy for you to think about someone that you know, or your ministry experience, wherever it is that you might be sharing. One of them could be a young adult who attended the church as a youth or as a child, and all of a sudden they've come back to church for the first time after 10 years, and they've got this new little family around them. So that could be the person that you put in the circle in the middle. And then you start to think about, what are the things that are they seeing? What are the things are

they feeling? What are the things that they're doing, right? So imagine they've got a couple of baby, toddlers, young children with them. It could be a boyfriend, someone's brought along who's never been to church before, someone's brought along their boyfriend, they're a regular church attendee who brought along their boyfriend. Yeah, it could be a young adult who's just walked in off the street, just a random person that's rocked up to church on a Sunday. I know that doesn't typically tend to happen to us very often. But I was speaking to Lindsay Sills, who I'm staying with, and she said last Sunday, they had someone walk in straight off the street, and everyone panicked, right? Because it rarely happens? Or the other one you can imagine is a young person who has asked, or they've texted you, "Hey, I'd like to go out for a coffee." We're to put yourself in their shoes, so you're trying to be empathetic to them. What are some of the things that you think would be going through their mind so that we can help understand and potentially help offer them hospitality and help meet their needs? So, in your reflections, as you start to think about putting yourself in this person's shoes, but from a more specific, concrete, different things about what they see, what they think, what they do, what were some reflections that you noticed that maybe surprised you, that you're like, Oh, I didn't ever really think about that until tonight. Or what's something that you realized, actually, I think young adults value this the most based on your map. Or, what could we be looking at doing differently to welcome young adults based on some of the things you've mentioned? Jim, did you want to comment?

**Jim Trinkle** 20:32

Yeah, it's, it's hard for me, an older adult, putting myself in that position of that. It seems like, you know, I may be, guess he, may they may be, I may be clearly off the track of what they're wanting. Usually, when they walk into church, there's a reason why they're coming. And I don't know how I can guess at this and be halfway correct.

**Adam Wade** 20:57

Yeah, I mean, and that, in some ways, I think that's not a bad attitude to have, is to say, well, I can't guess necessarily, but there's some things you probably tell by observing them if they're standing back, if you know they might have arrived five minutes late and they might leave five minutes early, which would be indicative that they're pretty anxious and they're not really wanting to talk to anyone. So, there's things that we can do to say, Okay, what is it that they're seeing and are they seeing people go and talk to them? Oh, no, no one else is really going to talk to them. Maybe I'll go and talk to them, or I'm wondering what their, some of their struggles might be, and use that as the way to say, Oh, you've come along. Are you? Is this something you're exploring in your life? Like this is the first time here. So, to begin to perhaps, think about the situation and how it can be tricky to put ourselves in those shoes, but to potentially ask some questions, but just to have a little bit more of an awareness of how can we be a little bit empathetic to their situation? But it can be tricky. And this is where I get I think people would be looking for that kind of relationship, because they're looking for a mentor. They're looking for someone for spiritual guidance. And so, they might be looking for a grandparent type figure. If they've never had someone in their life that offered that sort of life guidance. They could actually be looking for someone like you Jim, that needs to be able to sit down and just be able to have a talk and say, Tell me about your life. What are some of your hopes and dreams? Let me unpack that with you, so that can be, yeah, something to consider.

**Jim Trinkle** 22:30

But I think, you know, you try to find line there of wanting to be friendly, but not wanting to be pushy, and not wanting, you know, to ask a question. But really, should you ask it? Is that being you know too much and I have that experience at times. We when someone new comes into our church, one of the things that we try to do is not have him sit alone. You know, having somebody sitting with him, etc. And it's interesting. Different reactions come from that.

**Adam Wade 22:58**

Yeah, it can be interesting. And yeah, there's definitely, I think there's a fine balance, and that you don't want to be harassing them by any stretch of the imagination. But I think one of the things that I think is really beneficial. And this goes for youth, young adults, if you want them to talk, give them something to eat. It sounds really weird. Give them a cup of coffee in their hand or give them something to eat, and it sounds strange, but if they start eating, their mouth starts to move, and their mouth then starts to move. It's bizarre, but it actually works. So, if you ever have a, if you ever teaching a youth class or anything like that, throw a bunch of candy in the middle, because then they'll actually start talking. So yeah, so it's a good reflection. And I think it's about stretching ourselves to put them in the shoes, and even with what you shared, if we're in their shoes, and all of a sudden, 10 people are asking all these firing questions at them. Well, that's not... If they're anxious, going to make them a heck of a lot more anxious, so being sensitive to that as well. Thanks, Jim. What about in the room? What did we had a couple of small tables here discussing things. I'll try and walk closer so you can hear through the microphone. Anything you want to share any of the groups?

**Unidentified Speaker 24:10**

Some of us are from the same congregation. We had a gentleman who was in rehab, and he started attending sporadically, and we called him part of the family now so he could share what he hadn't, you know, had to think about he took off because he was feeling anxious, and one of our people drove after him and invited him back, which is what he needed that day. So we felt like, you know, we were led by him and what he said, as well as five. The Spirit. You know, we had a member sitting here who was a family counselor, and so was able to, you know, explain to him what administration was. So we prayed with them and, you know, laid on hands and talked to him about his struggle with people at the house he was staying at, and how they get the kind of job that he was interested in, and just, you know, his life events.

**Adam Wade 25:17**

Yeah, wonderful. I, I like the thought of someone chasing someone down in a car that sounds like it's very dramatic and exciting, and, you know, leap in the car and head after them. No, yeah, that's right. So no, I yeah, that that's wonderful. So I mean, in that case, yeah, it was definitely a sense of what we recognized that he was really anxious. We want to show him he doesn't need to be anxious. He can come and be a part of us. And so putting yourself in his shoes. Anything else came to mind?

**Unidentified Speaker 26:00**

So we speculated on a senior in high school who had reached out to us to want to go to coffee and beyond that, we hadn't met with them yet, and so we did a bit of imagining of what they might be going through at that stage in their life, whether they're feeling doing to kind of more equip us with some

empathy on what they might come to our coffee conversation with, but recognizing that it was pretty bold of them to reach out to want to be one on one. So...

**Adam Wade 26:18**

Yeah. So yeah, yeah. And I would say, okay, if I'm putting myself in their shoes, they've actually picked up the phone. They've probably sent the type the text message out 10 times before they actually hit send. And so, then it's like, okay, so they're obviously feeling a little bit anxious. So, you'd say, Okay, how do I offer hospitality to someone that's going to turn up and feeling very anxious? And it'd be, it's great to see you. What would you like for the coffee? Let's sit down and have a chat, and let's find a nice corner so that they're not sitting in the middle of a coffee shop with people walking around while they obviously want to share something deep and meaningful. So, that's what they see. So, if they're seeing, Oh, there's a lot of people here, and they're all going to be listening to me, it's like, why don't we get it to go and let's just walk around the neighborhood and walk and chat, and then you're walking beside them and not sitting there opposite so, so that's the purpose of the exercise. Is just to use this to perhaps reflect on different ways to approach that so that you can offer them hospitality in their situation. And so that's what I wanted to get at this. These are to create some some insights for you in terms of, how can we meet young adults or young people where they are, so to be able to meet them where they're at, and how could we look at changing our communication or our spaces so that we can perhaps focus on those pains or motivations, the pains and gains at the bottom, because that's probably the place where they're wanting to contact you in the first place and reach out for you to help guide them on their spiritual journey. And how can we show that we we understand their experiences, like Jim said, without being too intrusive or overbearing and aggressive and like it's yeah, that there's just so much focus. But how do we actually say we don't want to be that, but we want to be hospitable. So how do we extend that for them? And then, just to wrap up, like I said, for me, true hospitality is about welcoming others and then trying to listen to what their needs are. That's how the ministry of Tuesday church started. Was because we sat at the table and there was just a safe space for her to express what her needs were in her life at that time, and it's about guiding their spiritual needs, rather than focusing on, oh, I have to try and be friends with this person, but maybe just look at now, how can I be a spiritual mentor or a guide? Perhaps one of those ways is to reflect back and look at who were the spiritual guides or the mentors for you in your life, and what were the things that they did for you back when you were a young person? What was it that really helped shape you in your life? And like I said, we don't need to become everyone's friend to grow disciples, because I would really like you to grow at least 100 disciples. I don't expect you to go out and try and find 100 friends so, but with disciples to be able to help people on their journey and journey together as we learn. We learn from them, and they learn from us. So I thought I'd finish with the scripture from Romans, 12: "Never be lacking in zeal, (but not too much zeal, according to Jim, just keep it under control,) but keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." from Romans 12. You. So hopefully that's beneficial to you and just provides another opportunity for you to reflect next time you want to engage with youth or young adults. And again, remember, you never know who the person is that you're talking to and what they might become into the future. So but thanks everyone for joining here in the room. Thanks for joining online. Appreciate you guys being here And yeah, Thanks guys.