

IN-N-OUT Level

Being burger-loving Californians, we are always happy to have a Habit Burger, or McDonalds or IN-N-OUT Burger close by—after all, these three were founded in California and grew with great success. You can barely get IN or OUT of the IN-N-OUT locations because of the long drive-thru lines or crowded parking lots. But beyond burgers, we wanted to share some thoughts on the IN and OUT theme from a spiritual perspective.

A challenging question we often ask ourselves is “how do we engage with the people around us in ways that will provide opportunities to share the grace and truth of Jesus Christ with them?” Three of our favorite books on this topic are:

Why Jesus Crossed the Road by Bruce Main.

Following Jesus to unconventional places.

The Unexpected Adventure by Lee Strobel and Mark Mittelberg. Taking everyday risks to talk with people about Jesus.

Small Things with Great Love by Margot Starbuck. Adventures in loving your neighbor. In this book, Starbuck shares many helpful examples of people of every age and season and personality, explaining the practical possibilities they have of making a difference. For instance, studies show that extroverts are 50% to 75% of the world and introverts 25%-40% of the world and they have different ways of engaging the people around them. We as a couple joke that Bob, the extrovert, likes to go OUT of the door, and Suzanne, the introvert, likes to come IN the door! We each do a different amount of talking and listening, using different gifts and experiences in our ministries and relationships

In studying the life of Christ for a seminar, I made an informal survey of where and how Jesus spent his time. The results:

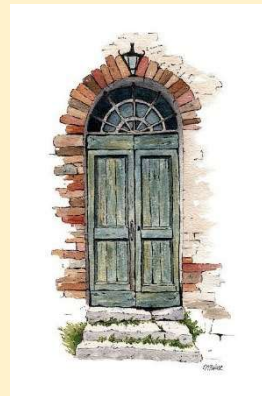
50% of his time was OUT of doors
25% of his time was IN the synagogue and temple
25% of his time was IN homes

Basically then, half of His time was OUTside and half of his time was INside. And what did He do in all of these places? He talked and taught. He asked questions and answered questions. He touched people and healed them. He ate meals. He fed 5,000 on a hillside. He BBQed breakfast for his disciples. He forgave. He challenged. He wept. He attended events.

He prayed. He engaged with his Father and with people, bringing the two together. And he did it all dwelling among them with grace and truth.

We served with Martha Kelsey during part of her long, fruitful ministry in Jordan. She is now, at 96 years, living in an apartment at a senior residence in New Jersey where she continues her steady engagement with people. She invites others IN to her apartment, always having cookies ready just like she did in Jordan. She tidies the library, she sings in the chorus, she does water aerobics. She also scans Facebook daily for news of her many friends back in the churches in Jordan. She writes long, curious and encouraging emails about the work in Jordan; then she prays. She gets to know new people at the residence and invites them OUT to church, helping them to get their walkers and wheelchairs on the bus. She loves getting pictures and phone calls and sharing new stories. She is amazing!

As we are OUT and about the various neighborhoods here in Amman, and as we invite people IN for coffee and spiritual conversations, we want to remain alert to their reality, their struggles, their joys. Asking and answering questions in Arabic is familiar territory as we love to introduce the real God to real people in real life situations. We model our prayer for ministry on that of Paul in Colossians 4: “Pray that God would open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ. Pray that we may proclaim it clearly as we should...making the most of every opportunity.”



Jordan has many beautiful old doors and many beautiful people. Sometimes the doors and the people are surrounded by stones that make things harder. Pray that God will open doors in human hearts that will lead to new and growing faith. And may you also, in your own situation, and with your own personality and experience, live lives that pay attention compassionately to those around you, seeking to serve and speak and share in unusual and effective ways, whether IN or OUT!

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Bob and Suzanne Robertson
Sharing Christ's Love with Urban Arabs