



Retention 5 Ways to Combat Drifting

How do we remain connected to those people who are slowly falling away from small groups, churches or even their faith? Ken Braddy is the director of Sunday school at LifeWay Christian Resources and associate pastor at Fair Haven Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Tennessee.

1. Contact the people on your group's ministry list regularly. It is awkward to reach out to people

on your group's ministry list who've been absent for an extended period of time. The only way to fight the awkwardness is to make sure the awkwardness doesn't happen in the first place. If absent group members are contacted quickly, they'll be less likely to drift away.

2. Organize your group into care groups. Delegate the shepherding function to other leaders in your group who can become responsible for serving small groups within your group. These leaders can do the bulk of the heavy lifting and help keep absent group members feeling connected to the larger group.

3. Don't hang a label on absent members. Your group members who are drifting are precious to the Lord.

They should also be precious to you and your fellow group members. Don't let anyone look down on them—they may have legitimate reasons for being absent during COVID-19.

4. Welcome them back warmly. Some "drifters" will feel awkward and will wonder how they will be received if they show up again in the group. Encourage them to come back, welcome them warmly and let them know they are wanted.

5. Provide a study guide for every group member. Delivering or mailing one to absent group members will give them a tool to help them stay engaged in God's Word daily.

—Ken Braddy
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DID YOU KNOW?

Drifting Away

40% of those who have watched religious services online or on TV say they have watched services offered only by the congregation that they typically attend.

30% say they have watched services both from their own congregation and from others.

29% say they have exclusively watched services offered by congregations or religious organizations other than the one they typically attend.

—Pew Research Center

32% of practicing Christians have stopped attending church altogether during the pandemic.

—Barna

1 in 5 churches could close within the next 18 months, based on current trends.

—David Kinnaman
Barna president