Planting Seeds in the Community for Future Growth

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9 NIV)

College Hill Baptist Church in Lynchburg, VA, has been ministering to their community for over 140 years. A church that once saw 1,000 members on Sunday mornings now averages 35-40 each week, with the majority being senior adults. Through the years, the church has remained faithful in helping their neighbors. Members provide drivers for a Meals on Wheels program, volunteer at the hospital, and work with a local food ministry. One big impact they have seen is with its connection to a school, R.S. Payne Elementary School, which is located right across the street. Here are a few steps church members have taken to reach its community that your church can do, too:

1. **Provide a meal for school employees.** College Hill hosted a lunch on the last day of school for all school staff in the fellowship hall. Over 80 school employees greatly appreciated this gesture.

2. **Partner on a school’s projects.** Whether it’s tutoring students after school, helping with hunger through backpack buddies, or whatever outreach the school is doing, a church can find ways to assist. R. S. Payne has many transient families and some can’t afford the school supplies. Because many teachers were using their own money to help, the school held a spring carnival to raise money for the school supplies. College Hill provided baked goodies to sell at the carnival.
3. **Have a back-to-school festival.**
Consider hosting a time for families to play games, win school supplies, and share a meal together. Obtain the school supply list and have those required supplies on hand. Have registrations for door prizes so that info can be gathered for follow-up communications. Door prizes can be a refurbished computer, local gift cards, school supplies, and Bibles. This festival can be a multi-generational event. College Hill saw youth and young adults wanting to make a difference in the community. They contacted service organizations at local colleges, inviting over a dozen college students to help at the festival.

College Hill also partnered with a sister church, Calvary Baptist Church in Lynchburg, who provided many school supplies. Several seeds were planted there with every child receiving a New Testament. One child chose a Bible over the other prizes offered, and then requested more Bibles for her siblings. The school principal and staff so appreciated the efforts of College Hill to reach the students of R. S. Payne.

College Hill Baptist Church learned that God can use even small groups and churches to plant seeds.

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