

17Seeds

6 Ways for Church Folk to Break Down Racial Walls

1. Pray.

Pray for your sincerity, sensitivity, and commitment to biblical racial reconciliation. Be prepared for God to show you areas where you could be more intentional and sacrificial. Be instant with repentance and forgiveness as the Spirit prompts. If needed, fast **and** pray. (Matthew 17:21)

2. Read well.

Each month, seek out quality Christian books for entertainment, enlightenment, and spiritual growth. Challenge yourself to read something by Christian authors of other races and cultures.

3. Study the Word.

Chances are you're familiar with 2 Corinthians 5 verses pertaining to our ministry of reconciliation. Study the story of Jesus with the Samaritan woman and the Good Samaritan through a racial lens. In Biblical times, Jewish and Samaritan interaction was taboo and long-term relationships were strictly forbidden.

4. Visit other church folk.

Don't wait for a special occasion or church-organized program. Befriend a congregation that has a different racial makeup from your home church. Join them in worship once a

month. Sit in the same spot each time. Get to know the names of the people sitting around you. See what naturally develops out of your new relationships.

5. Eat out.

Invite some friends of another race out for dinner and talk about you. That's right. About you—your job, your family, your pets. Allow them to do the same. Try to schedule the dinner date once a month. Invite others to join you.

6. Give up but don't give in.

Don't worry about saying or doing all the 'right' racial things. Give up on that myth. Likewise, don't give in to old habits of racial distrust and bitterness.



About Linda Leigh Hargrove:

Ms. Hargrove has co-led racial reconciliation discussion groups and conducted panels on racism in the church.

Her published writings include two novels: *The Making of Isaac Hunt* (June 2007) and *Loving Cee Cee Johnson* (September 2008). She blends suspense, humor, and faith into compelling stories about race and class in America.

The former environmental engineer currently resides in Greensboro, North Carolina with her husband and three sons where she operates 1721 Media, LLC, a graphic design company catering to small and medium sized nonprofits and small businesses. Visit her online at LLHargrove.com or 17Seeds.com.