Conference Attendance for Dummies

Juliet West 14 June 2016



So you got tired of 'FOMO' (yes folks I just used that youthful slang i.e. 'fear of missing out') and decided to stretch yourself! You don't want to miss out on anything else, you're all signed up, and ready to attend your first ever Four12 Conference. Well done! You're one step closer to a new God adventure! As a frequent 'conference attender' myself and a PK (Pastor's Kid) of 29 years I feel at least partially qualified to share with you a few things, in the hope of improving your conference experience!

The 'Easy Eight' Tips:

1) Print out your ticket (on old-school paper): Yes, I know we live in a techno-forward world but there is always the room for error, a dead phone battery, a power failure (yes not just in South Africa folks). You don't want to be that person holding up the whole queue as you innocently shrug your shoulders and say, "oh we had to actually have the ticket with us now, can't you just find my name somewhere?".

2) Dress comfortably (and in layers): Conferences usually involve God encounters of many kinds. Stage diving, hitting the ground as the Holy Spirit sweeps you off your feet...these are all possibilities. No matter how cute that new little dress is, you will regret it, trust me.

3) Take notes: Even if you think to yourself: 'when will I ever re-read these notes?'. Well, firstly you really should change that, read the notes again- there are far too many pearls to remember and apply all at once. Taking notes helps you concentrate through sessions, especially the longer ones- let's face it, for those of us who aren't school or university students, we aren't used to sitting through more than one preach per day. Be real.

4) Greet The Volunteers: At every conference there are those almost invisible people just buzzing around. Take the time to thank them for serving, give them a big smile and say hello. These guys and ladies are usually there far earlier than you are to set up and leave only when everybody else is safely home already. They're amazing, let them know all about it.

5) Get Some Sleep : Conference times can be so exciting, you're pumped, you're meeting new people, God is moving… sleep when you're dead right? Wrong. I have seen one too many snoozing (admittedly usually teen to 30-year-olds) in 'unfortunately too comfortable' conference chairs. Hang out with people, but also ensure you get a good few hours sleep every night. Jam-packed times of impartation require you to be alert and awake enough not to miss out. Sleep. Do it.

6) Mix it Up: Talking about meeting new people, well this won't just happen. In the words of the wise Winnie The Pooh, "You can't stay in your corner of the forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes." Be brave, go into the conference venue at least once and choose a seat without looking for familiar faces. Walk into the venue, sit down and embrace the adventure of seeing who will end up next to you (helpful tip: often the quickest way to make new friends is to share your conference snacks with them). Why not?

7) Get Involved: You can combine all the right cake ingredients, use the greatest oven in the world, but if **YOU** don't turn the oven on, that cake batter isn't going to turn into a cake anytime soon. We are much the same, oftentimes we attend a conference with all the 'right ingredients', and walk away disappointed. We sat back waiting for something to happen in us or to us, and we leave not having seen or felt much. This one is a big one (my own dad often says this), "you can have as much of God as you want", it's true. As much as you're willing to step out, arrive hungry, be expectant, press in, take part…that's how much you're going to experience. Nothing just happens, even when it looks like it does. God loves hungry hearts, come hungry.

8) The 'C' Word: Some of us break out in hives at just the mention of the word 'conference'. We're evangelical, 'passionate about Jesus', sold-out Christians. We like words like outreach, missions, encounters… **conference** that reminds us of the stiff and corporate. My advice: don't sweat the small stuff. There is always going to be an opportunity to 'break out in hives' i.e. get really offended about something. 'That pastor is preaching in shorts', 'no one came to pray for me', 'the worship seemed very self focused today', 'I'm sure he didn't reference that scripture correctly'. Go with an open heart, go with a determined heart- to meet with your Lord and His people, to be **'unoffendable'** and open to His Spirit.

Okay that is me done, I hope you're now feeling even more ready to go, go, go! Have fun, tweet about it, post your testimonies all over Facebook, spread the good news of Jesus- anytime, anywhere.