

Ten Reasons Why Youth Should Be Involved In Youth Ministry

When Paul left Crete he told Titus to appoint elders to "set in order what remains." Effective ministry requires some degree of oversight and organization and churches have typically found the youth are best served in the context of a youth group. First Baptist Church of Auburn is no exception and the youth groups of our church have been a vital part of our ministry from our beginning.

However, not all Christians appreciate the significance of the youth ministry in the life of their children. Even the many Christian parents who believe the church youth group is important for their kids are faced with challenges that prior generations did not confront. It seems easier than ever for youth to find other endeavors to pursue apart from the church and Christian parents seem more willing than ever to help them.

Because we believe our youth groups are an essential element for the ministry to our young people, here are reasons why youth should participate actively in our youth ministry.

1. In order to serve others

The foremost reason for personal involvement in a youth group or any Christian group is to serve others. When we participate to serve our own needs we will eventually find the group lacking what we think we need in some respect. When we no longer look to ourselves but to the needs of others, we find our needs truly met by God according to His will (Luke 9:23-24). Children are not exempt from God's desire for us to live a life of service.

While it is possible to serve others apart from a youth group, it is impossible to serve in the life of the church apart from being where the people are. In our church, young people collect themselves in the youth group. If a young person is going to have a ministry to their peers in the context of our local church, it will happen in the youth ministry.

2. In order to better share Christ with non-Christian friends

The people that each of us is most suited to reach out to are our peers. Teenagers will be more likely to follow other teenagers and therefore a youth group becomes invaluable in ministry to other teenagers. No one has a ministry unto himself and our youth need other youth with adult leadership to assist them in outreach, not only in the group meetings but informally outside the group time.

3. To function in the body of Christ

The Scripture has no age when a person suddenly is gifted and able to minister to others in the church. Youth have a responsibility and a vital role in the ministry of the church. According to 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, each Christian needs to be actively involved in serving the church, the body of Christ, or the whole suffers.

4. In order to have greater opportunities to serve in ministries

Our youth groups serve as a training ground for service in ministry. The groups will take on certain service projects in the church from time to time. Also, positive involvement in the youth group opens up additional opportunities in other areas of the church upon the recommendation of the youth leadership. This can be an invaluable ministry training opportunity for serving the Lord for a lifetime. The ability of youth to minister is sometimes overlooked (cf. 1 Timothy 4:12).

5. For accountability by oversight from youth leaders

The youth group provides a spiritual environment for growth through accountability to adult leadership. Our youth groups offer smaller groups with an adult to guide them in their spiritual life. This can be a great asset during difficult times.

6. For accountability and fellowship through involvement with Christian peers

Many of our youth are active in helping each other maintain their walk with God. This is another product of our discipleship groups. Accountability and discipleship should be a part of every Christian's life and our groups seek to build constructive patterns of relationships for each student. This type of positive peer pressure serves youth well.

The youth ministry also provides the best setting for young people to find the godly friendships that are so valuable in protecting them from the temptations of the world. The importance of having friends who are seeking the Lord in the context of a local church cannot be overstated.

7. To be instructed in God's Word in a manner most relevant to youth

Our church is seeking for the same purpose in ministry with the youth as we do with the adults. We are seeking to fulfill Christ's great commission of Matthew 28:19-20 to make disciples. Yet youth are in a unique station of life, with special issues facing them that they may not have encountered before. Add the growing independence they sense from their family and the value of a strong youth ministry is even more critical. The teaching in the youth ministry is as biblically oriented as the teaching throughout the church but is able to apply the Scripture to the unique needs and learning level of teens. Biblical teaching is essential in light of the worldly perspectives that are confronting young people from so many religious and secular sources these days.

8. In order to develop an appreciation for the local church

Integration of a child into our youth group will help them see the church as a whole, with the youth as a vital part of the church. Children that progress through our Junior High and High School groups are vastly more likely to function maturely and effectively in the church as they move into adulthood. Conversely, we have seen that children that do not

participate in our youth groups very often struggle to move successfully into our adult ministries. In our youth groups, an opportunity exists for involvement with the breadth of the church, from children through adult ministry.

9. In order to prepare for Christian life outside of school

A child's school years come to an end sooner than they think. Christian relationships in school vanish quickly apart from the local church. There are no campus ministries for adults. Youth groups are in a much better position to aid young people's transition into the life of the local church after school.

10. Because our church has established youth groups for ministry to youth

Implicit in Paul's command for Titus to organize the church in the island of Crete was that the Christians were to respond to God's plan through the appointed elders. Each of us, regardless of our age, should cooperate with God's ordained plan to set in order the people of the church for the purpose of ministry. Opting out of this plan not only hurts us, it sets the church back as well. For it is through the organization of God's people that Jesus will build His church (Matthew 16:18).

Conclusion

The first four reasons make the point that youth input is needed and the last six reasons show that youth need input. The aspect of serving is placed first to emphasize that coming to the youth group with an attitude of "how can I serve God here" is fundamental to long-term success. While we certainly benefit from our service to others, our motivation ought not be "what can these people do for me." Christ calls all people, young and old, to give themselves for others (John 12:24-26).

These reasons are directed toward the parents of children because we believe parents have the God-given role of leading their children toward godliness. This presumes that the parents themselves are maturing in their faith through the application of God's Word to their life. It is difficult to expect parents to lead their children beyond where they themselves have followed Christ (Luke 6:40).

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