

Hey, Boomers! Let's Step up and Be the Elders the Church Desperately Needs Right Now

We've been doing this badly, folks. Here are three simple steps to help my generation of Boomers become better at discipling the next generation.

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What's wrong with today's younger generations?

I hear that question all the time. Especially from my fellow Baby Boomers.

The quick answer?

Nothing.

Nothing is wrong with the current and upcoming generations that hasn't been wrong with every previous generation.

With one possible exception. They don't have the elders and mentors that almost every previous generation before them has had.

And why is that? Because (I hate to say it) my generation of Boomers is not discipling the next generation as well as previous generations did for us.

Boomers, It's Time to Become Elders

If you, like me, are a Christian and a Boomer (born between 1946 and 1964) you need to know that our primary mission at this stage of our lives is to become the elders and equippers that every generation of the church always needs.

The biggest "sin" millennials have committed in the eyes of many of my Boomer colleagues is ... not wanting to do church exactly the way we did it.

Instead, too many of us stand back, cross our arms and complain that Millennials are entitled, they're lazy, they're loud, they're (insert your complaint here ... on second thought, don't).

But that is no truer of this generation than of our generation. In fact, I'm convinced that the biggest "sin" millennials have committed in the eyes of many of my Boomer colleagues is ... not wanting to do church exactly the way we did it.

But no generation should do church exactly the way anyone else did it. Because they're not like anyone else.

Each generation needs to honor God, worship Jesus, disciple believers, reach their community, and teach the unchangeable truths of God's Word in the way God leads them to do it. Not in the way they're parents are most comfortable with.

A Generation Ready to Be Mentored

Like every generation that preceded them, today's young believers need the wisdom, kindness and counsel of previous generations to become the mature disciples they want to be.

And, despite all the protestations to the contrary, this new generation is as open, maybe even more open to being mentored by their elders than Boomers ever were. We're the ones who came up with the phrase "[don't trust anyone over 30](#)", remember?

If we will step up, they will listen. But we can't become the elders the church needs by complaining, demanding or whining about them. As I wrote in a previous post, [We Can Whine About the New Generation or Worship with Them – But We Can't Do Both](#).

Here are three ways we Boomers can start to become the elders the church needs:

1. Stop Isolating, Start Engaging

We won't be heard if we refuse to participate.

In too many churches, pastors are still having to divide the church into young/old, contemporary/traditional categories to try and please everyone. And, in my experience, that happens far more often because Boomers refuse to sing new songs than because Millennials refuse to sing old ones.

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We can't lead, guide and help younger generations if we're cutting ourselves off from them during the time the entire body should be getting together.

2. Stop Complaining, Start Encouraging

No one will open themselves up to learn from a person who's default response is to complain about everything – or most things.

Complainers have little influence. Encouragers have a lot. After all, no one's life was ever made worse by receiving too much encouragement.

Too many compliments? Too much flattery? Those are a problem. But there's no such thing as too much encouragement.

If you want to have influence start by being an encouragement. Encouragement is like water in the desert. It softens hearts, cools tempers and opens people up to receive what we have to give.

3. Stop Demanding, Start Equipping

Now I'm gonna get blunt.

If you're a mature believer, you need to act like one. Show up at church to serve, not to be served.

Put yourself in a position of influence by becoming the servant Jesus calls all of us to be.

Stop demanding that the pastor, the worship leader and the young people (if your church has any) do church your way, and start asking how you can help the next generation serve Jesus with even greater passion and wisdom than previous generations.

We have the years. The experience. The tools. The maturity.

Now we need to add the willingness to engage, encourage and equip. And maybe even learn a few new things along the way.

It's time to get to work.