

# **The Responsibility of the Church to Her Youth**

1. The New Testament is God's message to the church and is addressed to believers as a corporate body. The spiritual objectives and responsibilities are essentially the same for both youth and adult believers. The primary mission of the church is to win the unsaved to discipleship and to nurture believers to spiritual maturity.

2. The church is composed of believers who are also members of homes. In the home youth receive their basic training. Here youth first learn how to have wholesome relationships with persons of different ages. Open communication between parents and youth in the Christian home is crucial if there is to be open communication between youth and adults in the church. The church program should motivate parents to fulfill their task responsibly. Parents are responsible to give adequate time to their families and to provide wholesome activities for them.

2. Adolescence is a time of transition, physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually. During this time youth face such crucial issues as spiritual accountability, commitment to the Lord and believer's baptism. As they are received into the fellowship of believers, it is important for them to understand how the church functions as one body in Christ, if they are to apply themselves as part of the "team." From the Scriptures we learn that the contribution of each member is necessary for balance and completeness in the body. This concept is most effectively communicated to youth through the practice of the church. The church is responsible to provide for interchange between youth and adults in discussion groups, worship experiences, fellowship opportunities, and service activities. Through such participation youth come to appreciate teamwork in the life of the church. They are better able to develop appreciation and respect for their elders, and their elders experience satisfaction in a closer relationship with them.

3. Youth are motivated by goals that challenge them. Christian young people expect the holy life to be costly. They appreciate a church whose standards reflect the high quality of Biblical discipleship. The Church should welcome the opportunity to lead her young people to embrace and exemplify Christian ideals. Each young person should be challenged to relate to other youth in a way that will help them to "higher ground" spiritually. The program of the church should nurture unsaved youth to spiritual rebirth, inspire nominal Christian youth to full commitment, and arouse committed youth to their full potential.

4. God wisely planned the church to be composed of many members, having different gifts and functions, so that each member is necessary to the essential unity of the body. Young people are born into the church with various spiritual gifts and abilities. Youth must be trained to exercise their gifts properly if they are to experience normal spiritual development. It is important for the church to direct these youthful energies and abilities in a way that will help the total body of believers to fulfill its primary mission in the world. Youth is the time to prepare for the larger responsibilities in the church.

5. Christ's call to discipleship involves total abandonment of the old life and total commitment to the new. The church is responsible to transmit proper concepts of discipleship to young believers. Youth must see the beauty of holy living if they are to avoid the evil impulses and sensual pleasures that confront them. They must be prepared to face ridicule and rejection by either worldly associates or nominal Christian peers. They must be helped to appreciate the eternal benefits of simple and sacrificial living which at times may mean being unconventional. They must be challenged with the reality that the cause of Christ determines our earthly occupations and the use of our material possessions.

7. The church is responsible to provide opportunities for youth to give proper expression to their faith. Opportunities for participation in Christian service will strengthen the convictions of our young people and increase their resourcefulness in the life of the church. Church activities must be planned so that anyone in the church is welcome to participate. Youth find stability in the experience and counsels of their elders, and the older ones are stimulated by the zeal and originality of the youth.

Gospel teams provide opportunities for interchange between congregations or church groups. Literature distribution and home visitation provide opportunities for personal contact with the unsaved. Street meetings and institutional services are occasions for a public appeal in presenting the Gospel. Coming to the aid of needy families in the community can be an effective means of sharing Christ in word and deed. Participating in such activities helps youth develop a vision for the lost and aids them in becoming responsible personal witnesses.

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