

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

There are many churches with an attendance that is predominantly Senior Adults.

How can we become a church that is not only good at ministering to the Senior Adults who currently attend, but we are growing our capacity to reach more and more Senior Adults in our community every month and every year?

- About 20% of Americans are age 60 and older. That is one in five of the people in our city.
- People who are 60 may have at least 25 years to learn, serve, and lead.
- Retired people have time to volunteer and meet in small groups for learning and support.
- Retired people have skills that they can pass on to the next generation.
- As with any age, what kinds of things can we do that will increase fellowship, friendship, community and support?

Philosophy and Strategy

1. We need to have a Biblical picture of what it should look like as a person gets older. Ideally, as we go from our 20s to our 60s and 70s, we gain experience and wisdom. We gain skills and knowledge. We are in the ideal position to train, equip, mentor, disciple, encourage and coach the younger generations coming behind us.

Titus 2:2-4 “Teach the older women ... then they can train the younger women.”

II Tim 2:2 “And the things you have heard me say ... entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

2. We don't gain the qualities and skills of leadership in #1 automatically just because we are older in years or because we have attended a lot of worship services. Unfortunately, we have many adults in our churches who have not been equipped, they have not been disciplined, they have not developed the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. We should not put them in leadership just because they are older in years. We have to give equal diligence to help adults of all ages to accept Christ, grow in their personal walk with Christ, learn to serve and learn to lead.

3. We have to ask Senior Adults to read the Bible (every day?) at home and then give them time to share what they are learning when we get together in a small group. They can do it.

4. We have to help Senior Adults (and everybody) memorize some key verses of scripture. They can do it. (Examples: John 1:12, John 3:3, John 3:16, John 5:24, John 10:10, John 14:6, Rom 1:16, Rom 3:23, Rom 5:8, Rom 6:23, Rom 10:13, Ephes 2:8,9, I John 1:9, I John 5:11-12, Rev 3:20)

5. We have to help Seniors practice sharing their faith story and explaining the gospel. They can do it.

6. We can get Seniors into small groups and let them share prayer requests and be prayed for.

7. We can help find appropriate service projects for Seniors to help with in the church and in our community.

8. Small groups are great for adults of all ages. Seniors enjoy both SS classes and small groups in homes.

9. Fellowship is not automatic. Many adults attend church and SS class, sit by themselves and go home without ever feeling connected to others in the church. Having acquaintances is not the same thing as

friends. Friends spend time together. Friends eat together. Friends sit together in worship. Friends go to one another's homes. We should help facilitate better friendships in our Senior Adult ministry.

10. How does a church grow if almost everyone attending is a senior adult and there are almost no children, students or young adults? I think you start with who you have. You be very intentional to reach new senior adults in the community and the friends, relatives and neighbors of your members. There are churches with 30 seniors in attendance and there are churches with 150 seniors in attendance. I want to be the church with 150 seniors – more people, more resources, more skills, more opportunities for ministry.

Some churches have mostly senior adults attending and very few young adults, students and children. They may falsely believe that they are “good” at reaching senior adults, but they are usually wrong. Their group of senior adults is usually declining, not growing. I have seen very few churches that grew from 30 seniors to 60 seniors, or from 60 seniors to 120 seniors. Be very intentional to grow your senior adult ministry, share the gospel with them, train them to lead and serve, and train them to make disciples.

11. Make the center of your ministry about spiritual growth and serving others – and also food, trips and fun.

A Summary of Ideas Grouped Together

GROWING

- Help people develop a habit of reading the Bible several times a week at home.
- Help people be able to share what they read and learned from their Bible reading.
- Help people memorize at least 10 key Bible verses about the Gospel.
- Help people be able to tell their faith story to someone else.
- Help people be able to explain the Gospel to someone else.
- Help people to know how to pray and how to pray with someone else.
- Help people find a place of service – inside or outside the church.
- Help people find a small group that will become a group of friends, a support group.

SERVING

- Can we offer 20 ways to serve inside our church and help facilitate this?
- Can we offer 20 ways to serve outside our church and help facilitate this?
- Can a Senior serve and have a younger adult as their assistant/coworker?
- Can a younger adult serve and have a Senior as their assistant/coworker?
- How can the church regularly (not just once a year) show appreciation to volunteers?
- How can the church provide regular training for volunteers (not just once a year)?

MENTORING

- Work with children and students.
- Help the volunteers who work with children and students.
- Be a deacon with a younger man as your assistant deacon. Be an assistant deacon.
- Work with college, single adults or single mothers.
- Work with young couples and young parents.
- Teach music lessons.
- Help students learn how to run sound and tech.
- Teach a younger adult how to repair and maintain things at church.

- Lead a small group Bible study for people of any age.
- Be a helper/chaperone/leader for camps, retreats, mission trips or VBS.

WORSHIP

- Sit close to one another
- Sing familiar songs that speak to their heart
- Testimonies
- Friend Day lunches once a month to invite a friend to attend worship and lunch

SMALL GROUPS

- Some type of homework involved – read a chapter or several chapters
- Discussion oriented
- Prayer for everyone every week

FRIENDSHIPS

- People who worship together or go to SS class together are acquaintances.
- People who sit together, eat together, visit each other's homes, do fun activities, and help one another are friends.
- How can we facilitate growing friendships at church and away from church?

WHAT ARE SOME TOPICS OR ACTIVITIES THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST?

1. Exercise groups or classes
2. Discussion about finances – making a budget, food, insurance, Medicare, saving, investing, travel, housing, clothes, cars, repairs, gifts for grandchildren, giving, wills, power of attorney, assisted living, independent living, growing flowers and vegetables
3. Cooking Class
4. Supper Clubs – 3 couples bring food and eat supper once a month? Eat out once a month?
5. Game Nights – 2 to 5 couples meet once a month to play cards or board games, bowling, tennis, pickleball, horseshoes, or some kind of sport.

TRIPS

- A trip of one to five days
- A cruise
- A museum
- An amusement park
- A concert
- A play
- A movie