

Who Needs Those “Old People?”

Dr. Andy Hudson

Introduction

We live in a culture that worships youth and disdains the elderly. We see examples of this mindset everywhere. Teens abuse elderly nursing home residents for amusement. Many elderly folks are never visited by their younger relatives. Millions of dollars are spent every year on plastic surgery in an attempt to reverse the effects of aging. This marginalizing of seniors is also evident in the church. Many churches look for younger leadership because a senior could not “attract” the young people to their church. Dan Lucarini in his book *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement* suggests that young people ignore the concerns of elderly saints so they can change the church’s music to their liking.

Contrary to this attack on seniors, God has given a vital role to seniors in his plan for the church. Some will ask, “Who needs those ‘old people?’” The answer is: we should all value senior saints. Seniors are enabled by God to provide at least four incredible benefits to the church.

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- I. Senior saints provide a _____ of wisdom that needs to be taught to the next generation. This leads to stability in the church.
 - A. Both senior saints and younger saints must commit to their roles for there to be greater stability in the church.
 - B. This sharing of wisdom with the next generation will meet with opposition. Satan will fight against a strong church.

- II. Senior saints provide a sometimes painful _____ of the end result of sin. This leads to hope, purity, and gratitude in the church.
 - A. As the physical body of a senior saint deteriorates, we see clearly the true end of sin and the need for salvation in Christ.
 - B. When one is delivered from the penalty from sin through Christ, he has a hope of eternal life, strives for purity, and thanks God for His unspeakable gift.
 - C. Satan will make every effort to distort the picture of the true end of sin so that people will remain hopeless, immoral, and unthankful without Christ.

III. Senior saints provide a _____ of dependent living. This leads to encouragement in faithful living and to understanding of others' failures in the church.

- A. Senior saints have experienced God's faithfulness in the successes and failures in their Christian walk; as a result they have grown in their faith (i.e., they live in greater dependence upon God) AND they have become more understanding of the failures of others.
- B. Younger saints (because they have not had time to grow in their faith) tend to rely on their own strength AND they tend to be very critical of the failures of others (especially the failures of senior saints)

IV. Senior saints provide a quality _____ for labor in the church. This leads to quality service in the church.

Conclusion

With longer life spans, this should be one of the strongest times for God's church. The strength of the church is dependent, in part, on the value we place on the ministry of senior saints. Do you place a high value on the role of senior saints in your life and ministry?