

Cross Generational Lines - Connect the Dots

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“Honour older people as we do our own aged parents, and care for other’s children as one’s own.” Chinese proverb

I’ve had the unique privilege of growing up in a community and family that instilled in the fabric of my being - the value of generations. I’m surrounded with my generational roots, and have heard tales of the yester years and the chanteys’ and when they first bought their black and white T.V.; while contrasting those stories at family gatherings we’ve taught our 93 year old grandma to play the Wii! My appreciation for family of all ages could also be the fact that my mother is a genealogist in her spare time and has recorded over 60,000 names of our family tree. . . I’ve got a big family!

Truth is, I’ve got another even bigger family. So do you. It’s the family of God. We are all connected by the blood line of Jesus Christ and the loving adoption of our Heavenly Father as his own children – his daughters. It’s amazing.

The trouble I’ve come to see as a young woman, and young pastor, is that of a disconnect of our family. Out of great intentions, we have compartmentalized our church social hierarchy so much that we tend to only stick together with interest groups, and age defined groups. Though this has a great value in communicating truth with relevance at particular stages, perhaps we’ve lost our edge of connectedness. Thus, the understanding of each other as generation X,Y,Z, back to the boomers, and the G.I. generation sometimes gets lost in translation.

I’ve seen a couple articles describing this current new generation as the iGeneration (2001-onward). Obviously if any of you ladies have children you know where the “i” comes from- the apple technology generation. But I think this speaks more loudly that just a coined phrase when it comes to the family of God. We need less “i”, and more we. We need to cross generational lines and connect the dots. We need to re-establish multi-generationalism within our communities of faith. There is such benefit in coming together as children, youth, adults and seniors to share one another’s wealth of experience, and a fresh outlook on what’s happening in this generation. We all have something to contribute and we all can learn from each other.

I tribute my personal growth in my faith not only to my birth family, but to those plugged into God’s family. My call to ministry and development as a woman of God was a cross generational effort. It looked like little things such as sitting at my childhood friend’s table while his mom spoke the Word of God to me, it looked like a piano teacher who welcomed me to church and encouraged my gifts; it looked like a young Pastor’s wife who gave me opportunities to lead while coaching me along; it looked like a middle aged couple who always took me aside in the hall and told me how special I was; it also looked like a couple of “church grandma’s” who would share their stories of trial and victory and you would sense God’s faithfulness again at

just the right moment. There's an African proverb that says, "It takes a village to raise a child." I would say that was my experience, as men and women of all ages saw God's hand on my life and poured wisdom and encouragement into my life.

As women we need each other. God has designed us to be relational and to fellowship with one another. He has given us the gift of generations to pass back and forth this great faith in Christ – crossing generational lines. We need the wisdom of our forerunners, and the great cheerleading grandma's who pass the baton to other women of God. They will run with a passion and zeal demonstrated by the next generation women who carry a burden for their children rising up behind them and so on.

I challenge myself, and all the women in my family to rise to the challenge of living out life and faith fused together and to revive the value of generations in the grain of our faith. Women are unique in the fabric of our family. History tells us that our nature is to nurture and bring people together. Let's nurture the unity of generations in our circle of influence. Let us purpose to cross generational lines to connect the dots in unifying an army of women united under Christ. We are not alone in this journey of life, we are called to one another. "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus." Romans 15:5

In a time where we need women of faith to unite, let's remember a challenge that we see throughout the Bible: to recall the great things God has done and look forward to the new things He will do – generation 2 generation.