

Mentoring

Future Next Gen Leaders

In churches across the Commonwealth, men and women have answered God's call to use the talents and gifts He has given them to reach and teach the Next Generation. Psalm 78:4 says, "We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done" (ESV). But there is another side of this calling that needs to be awakened.

Investing in the next generation

Next Gen leaders are responsible for investing in the next generation of leaders: mentoring, coaching, and raising up passionate and eager young adults who desire to lead.

1 Peter 4:10 and Philippians 1:25 speak to the role of believers as being good stewards of the gifts God has given. Therefore, Next Gen leaders must enhance their education, experiences, and growth opportunities through conferences, books, and seminars. In this way, these leaders speak of the Lord's good deeds to the next generation of kids and future leaders who will further their influence and impact on future generations.

Jayne Hoare, elementary director at **Thomas Road Baptist Church**, shares, "Being so close to Liberty University, students come in and out of our doors every year, and likewise, my staff over the years has changed many times. This was very frustrating to me until I realized the opportunity I had to steward my position and where God had placed me. I began to seek out young leaders to develop and mentor, who would become apprentices and come alongside me and my staff to learn and grow. I am so fulfilled as a veteran leader to watch them develop their leadership abilities. And as they take with them a wealth of knowledge and a coach they can call on, they also take with them confidence as a leader."

Mentoring young leaders

Joshua had Moses, Apollos had Aquilla and Priscilla, Samuel had Eli, and Timothy had Paul. These are examples from scripture of great leaders investing in and developing the next generation of leaders. We, too, should pass on lessons learned from failures along the way, from resources we've read, practical knowledge, and stories of reaping seeds that have been sown.

Emma Hensley (now on staff with Hoare) commented, "Someone

once asked me what Bible figure I most related to, and without hesitation, I answered Timothy. God has placed incredible ministry leaders in my life who were willing to spend their time, energy, and resources pouring into me. I would not be half the leader I am today without their impact."

Erin Mannix, children's director at **Hickory Ridge Community Church** in Chesapeake, says, "1 Timothy 4:12 has been one of my favorite verses since I was a teenager doing summer ministry, and still is today. One of my mentors, Jayne Hoare, has embodied this verse and inspired me because she not only encouraged me in my faith as a child but also turned around and treated me with respect and love as an adult working alongside her in ministry. It has truly made me realize how important discipling the next generation is, even as they begin working beside you."

Paul encouraged believers in Philippi with these words, "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." (ESV)

Next Gen leaders, honor the Lord with all He has given you but also remember to pass it on to the future leaders coming after you. ■

