

Snippet: Emotional 'sins' of highly driven people | Christian Reflections | Blogs | Geneva Push

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Yep.



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Geneva Push is an Australian church planting network equipping a new generation of church planters with churchplanting resources, advice and support.

Q&A: What is the practical role of recent retired people in the church?

Big Bad Wolf asks: *What is the practical role of recent retired people in the church? Stacking chairs and serving cups of tea?*

Hi Wolf,

Is there some personal hurt behind your question? I would understand if there was because I have come across churches where the retired/older people are relegated to (what might sometimes be considered to be) menial or trivial tasks, and this is hurtful. So there might be a question behind your question.

But to interact with your question as it stands...

A church, like any organised community, takes a lot of energy to run. If people are to be blessed, particularly newcomers, then there is a necessary reliance on people putting their hand up to serve the community in many various ways. This includes stacking chairs and serving cups of tea!

So, there is no reason why a recently retired person should be excluded from acts of service, if they are willing and able.

I have come across many recently retired people who have delighted to serve the church in such a way, and have valued the fact that they can carry some of that load while they have the energy and the freedom from caring for children etc. that may not be afforded to others. Let us not denigrate the necessity, importance, and value of those so-called menial tasks of service and those that volunteer for them. As someone who has reached the end of service to be faced with 100 chairs to pack up, having someone say, "Will, I'll do that" is such a relief and a blessing, truly soothing. I value it greatly.

But perhaps your question implies an "only" – is that the "only" role for the recently retired? Absolutely not! Each member of the body is gifted according to the Spirit one to another so as to build the people of God and further the gospel. The task of the church is to encourage everyone, regardless of their age, towards ongoing maturity and the wise application of their gifts and talents.

However, if there is one direction that I would, generally

speaking, encourage the “recently retired” to particularly explore, it is the task of mentoring. The age group you refer to have a particular wealth of experience and knowledge to gift the church with. If they can be involved in some way, large or small with the ongoing task of identifying, apprenticing, releasing and commissioning newer leaders they will have blessed God’s people and produced much fruit for his glory in that way, and it may be a useful framework for their direct hands-on ministry.

Thanks for the question,

W.

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I had this piece emailed to me today by a member of my leadership team. Bill Wilson posts “7 Things Your Pastor Wishes You Knew, But Is Afraid To Tell You”

- It’s not their fault, but your minister didn’t learn everything they needed in seminary to be a pastor. Like doctors leaving medical school, clergy need a time to do their “residency” and learn to practice in the field what they’ve learned in the classroom. Actually, that theological education never stops. So give your minister permission not to be perfect and always to be learning.
- Every pastor must learn to “choose their guilt.” There is always more to do than there is time to do it. Every minister must come to terms with an inherent guilt around what he or she did not do today. Too often that means their own family gets the leftovers. By the way, this is a dilemma for all of us regardless of our vocation.

- Be kind if you have a criticism. Healthy clergy welcome constructive criticism. Everyone abhors petty nitpicking. Make sure you engage in the former and not the latter.
- Have some realistic expectations for the pastor's family. How many ways can we say this? Please give your minister's family an extra measure of grace.
- Err on the side of generosity. I'm not just talking about money, though I am talking about money. I also mean be generous with your attention, questions, interest, ability to remember family names, laughter, food, jokes, invitations to ball games and your life.
- Your pastor loves you, but he or she may or may not like you. As in your family, there are days when your spouse, child or parent loves you, but is frustrated by you or wondering what they did to deserve you. That ambivalence is part of being human. Own it and expect it.
- Your comfort is not your pastor's primary concern. Hope you know this. If not, read the Bible and remind yourself why your church exists in the first place. Trying to be priest (comforting the afflicted) and prophet (afflicting the comfortable) to the same people is confusing, messy and an invitation to misunderstandings.

I'll have to write my own list one day.

