

covenantal living and young adults

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The understanding and the willingness to engage in **covenantal living** is possibly the best answer to the almost universal question, “*How do we get young people to come to our church?*” For the generation who wants to **belong** before they **believe**, offering young adults a place to develop relationships, and being a trustworthy place for them to invest their lives is an absolute necessity. If we want them to hear what we have to say about matters of faith, we must provide them with a place to grow and thrive in their covenantal relationships.

So, how would we go about understanding and implementing covenant living in pursuit of the elusive young person? To start with, we must lay down our fears, set aside our preconceived ideas, and open not just our doors, but also our hearts.



With that in mind, we must understand that ...

Covenant is agreement, and agreements always require more than one person or one perspective. Like all people, young adults want their voice to be heard and to matter. That only works if we invite them into the conversation. Ask them what they are thinking. It may surprise you that they want to know us and be part of us.

Covenant is intentional. Covenants don't just happen. There usually is a problem or an issue within the community that needs attention. Young adults almost universally hate conflict, and their understanding of church is that arguing and taking sides is how things are resolved. Young people need for us to model a way of disagreeing respectfully, and for us to help them know the issues and the reason for the conversation. Everything is not a fight.

Covenant is personal and relational. Covenant involves the whole community, not just the powerbrokers and the insiders. Covenant is a promise between every member of the group. It is neither a secret code nor an unspoken expectation. Talk about the things that matter in your church with everyone who is a part of the community. What are our core values and how do we live them out as a group of Christ-followers?

Covenant has expectations. As I say to young people all the time, “Unmet expectations are

the source of almost all disappointment and disharmony.” We cannot meet each other's expectations if they are unspoken or unheard. How often do we assume that people know the Biblical story, the church's story, and our story? To new people, it often feels like they need to know the secret handshake to be part of our church. Tell the stories and help people know they are welcomed and needed to fulfill the bigger story of the Gospel.

Covenant has an outcome and is evidenced by action. Young people want to be a part of a church that has a vision and a clear calling, and they want to know what that vision is and how they can join in.

Young adults are hungry for authentic community. They want a place to serve and make a difference. Regardless of what you have heard, they are waiting to be invited into a covenantal relationship with Christ and His church. Pray for covenantal ways to be the presence of Christ to these young adults.