

The Ministry of Grandparents

Purpose:

1. To lift up the ministry of grandparents and their importance in their families.
2. To underscore the impact grandparents have on their grandchildren.
3. To bring forth what the ministry of grandparents involves.
4. The great calling grandparents have to pass on the faith in a way that affects future generations.

Grandparents are most often the oldest people in the bloodline of a family tree. They have lived the longest and experienced the most of life. This could mean for both their children and their children's children that their lives would be the greatest example of what it means to be a mature human being, one who has suffered the hard knocks and come through many of the growing pains of life. So, they are watched even though they may not think so. Their grandchildren may not say anything, but they know what they witness. Do they see love, wisdom, perseverance, and patience in their grandparents? Does an old person like a grandparent live with some joy and a real hope for a future with God?

Of course, there can be another side. Grandparents might be bitter about something or at someone. They might be broken down by life. They might be just doing their own thing with little thought for their children or grandchildren. It is easy in our society for grandparents to be on the sidelines. Few people, even in the church, are lifting up the ministry of grandparents. The result might be that the offspring are not impacted by the knowledge, wisdom, faith, and example of their grandparents. Or in the worst-case scenario, that impact may be negative or misleading.

Discussion Questions: What kind of influence have your own grandparents had on your lives? If we believe that a grandchild is noticing different aspects and attitudes of a grandparent, what sort of things might they be seeing from your experience? Do you think most grandparents have a clear idea of what God is expecting of them? Discuss.

If parents are to pass on the faith to their children, constantly sharing and living wisdom, showing how to live life, and praying for their children, what about grandparents? What is their calling, their assignments from God? This is a crucial question every grandparent needs to face and deal with. If we look at Psalm 78:1-8, it becomes apparent that if future generations are going to have faith, much of that transmission is going to come through grandparents. Nevertheless, they may notice that the media is not talking about this and perhaps not churches either. I know that even though I was a pastor for seven years in a small town in North Dakota where I easily could have brought all of this forward, I didn't. And when we pastors got together, we didn't talk about it even though many of the members in our congregations were grandparents.

One reason for this might be that the word "grandparent" is never used in the Bible. The only mention of a similar word is used when Paul talks about the impact Timothy's grandmother Lois has had on his life in passing on her faith, II Timothy 1:5. Does this mean that Biblical writers dismiss the importance of



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grandparents as being primary people in the lives of their offspring? That is a question we need to answer in this class.

A pastor, Josh Mulvihill, was working with families, especially parents. He did his work for a number of years, completely overlooking the grandparents in the congregation. One day he woke up and asked himself, “What about the grandparents?” Digging into this question brought him to write a book titled “Biblical Grandparenting”. What he discovered was while the word “grandparent” is not used, there are many places where the words, “one’s children’s children” are used.

Discussion Questions: Has it ever been pointed out to you the importance of grandparents in passing on their faith? If so, can you remember when that happened? What about someone bringing to your attention the importance of setting an example or passing on wisdom to their grandchildren? Is anyone holding grandparents accountable for their ministries? How might there be a realistic way for grandparents to realize someone is looking over their shoulder?

The reality is grandkids are not going to initiate relationships with their grandparents. This means grandparents have to make the effort to be available. We read in Proverbs 17:6, “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their parents.” When we look at this proverb, we realize a young grandchild cannot be the crown of an elderly grandparent. That child will have to grow up and at that point, it can become apparent that the influence of the grandparent begins to be manifest. All of this says that in all those years the child was growing up, the time spent with them, what got shared and modeled now has its effect on this now young adult. The crown, or way of being, points back to the influence that grandparents had upon them. Is not this a marvelous thing—much worth living for?

Discussion Questions: What is one positive influence you have seen a grandparent have on the life of a grandchild? What is something you see in a grandchild or child that indicates the seed has not fallen far from the tree? What do you see has been overlooked when it comes to the actual influence a grandparent has on a grandchild?

Directions: Hand out the sheet entitled “Grandparents, What is God Expecting of Them—Their Calling?” Go around the class and have each member read one line. Have people share two lines that stood out for them. If there is time, discuss these further.

Hand out and read over “Grandparents, In What Ways to Prepare Grandchildren.” If there is time, go over this as well and discuss what stood out for people.

Summary:

1. Grandparents pass on the faith verbally but also model what Christian living looks like.
2. The ministry of grandparents has a deep influence on future generations.
3. There are different ways that grandparents influence the lives of their grandchildren.
4. The importance of carrying out this ministry even if not much encouragement is given.



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Prayer Suggestions:

1. Thank God for grandparents.
2. As we consider the calling of grandparents, this subject may be daunting. Much of what we talked about may be very new and challenging for us.
3. For grace to grow more into who we can be as grandparents for our grandchildren.
4. For openness on the part of parents present to encourage the good influences their parents might have on their children.

Supplemental: Check the website www.legacycoalition.com. Look it over, and listen to some of the podcasts. Realize that in some Christian circles, the issue of the ministry of grandparents is now being addressed and discussed, helping churches and families grow stronger in passing on the faith. This is a new awareness and valuing that's occurred in the last 15 years.

Grandparents Quotes

"I am a success today because I had a friend who believed in me and I didn't have the heart to let them down." A. Lincoln.

"If nothing is going well, call your [grandmother](#)."

"Everyone needs to have access both to grandparents and grandchildren in order to be a full human being." Margaret Mead.

"Some of our greatest blessings call us 'grandma' and 'grandpa.'"

"Love is the greatest gift that one generation can leave to another." Richard Garnett

"Grandparents can be very special resources. Just being close to them reassures a child, without words, about change and continuity, about what went before and what will come after." [Fred Rogers](#)

"Grandparents are a treasure in the [family](#). Please, take care of your grandparents: love them and let them talk to your children!" [Pope Francis](#)