

VISION FORWARD



WE ARE GENERATIONS

A few months ago I dedicated a day to prayer for my family and Elim Grace. When I began praying for the different generations that make up Elim Grace, a picture of a giant river came to mind. Feeding that giant river were many smaller ones. I understood the large river to be the life and ministry of Elim Grace and the smaller ones to be its different generations.

My question to God was, "How can we ensure the generations continue to feed the river?"

His answer? "The voices of each must be present and heard."

We are blessed to have all generations represented in Elim Grace. Gen Z. Millennials. Gen X. Baby

Boomers. The Silent Generation. We are all here. Thankfully. And we are all different. Thankfully. Each generation and its differences should be recognized *and* welcomed.

Paul says in Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Let's apply this to generations: "In humility count other *generations* more significant than your own. Let each *generation* look not only to its own interest, but also to the interests of other *generations*." Imagine, Elim Grace, if we thought and lived this way? Why shouldn't we? Why couldn't we? This mind and attitude of humility, Paul says, is ours "in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). He gives it to us. It's ours, if we want it.

Blessing comes to and from unity. So to pursue God's blessing on Elim Grace is also to pursue God's blessing of unity—unity not only among individuals but also among individual generations.

We need the mind of Christ as we remember that:

1. ***Each generation has value*** - No singular generation has more or less value. Imagine a church with only one generation? If only an older one, a church ages out. If only a younger one, it fails to reach maturity. Each generation is valuable and brings value.
2. ***Each generation has preferences*** - We must recognize, respect, and celebrate our generational preferences. Yet we cannot allow those preferences to become bigger than our collective mission, which is: "together, to know Jesus and to make Him known". How we make Jesus known will differ from generation to generation. But we do this *together*.

Sometimes we will have to let go of and/or be willing to change some of our preferences. Not overnight. But little by little. Change changes you. Generations willing to love and serve one another will be both transformed and transformative. The truth is, nothing we do in Elim Grace will ever be 100% any one person's preference or any one generation's preference.

Each generation has a calling - Our calling is not to be consumers but participators. We are as generations individual members of and participators in the body, life, and ministry of Jesus. As such, we must learn to follow in the Apostle Paul's footsteps when he says in 1 Corinthians 9:20-23,

"To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its

blessings."

What did all these things have in *common* for Paul? The *gospel*. Yet, what drove all the differences between them? The *gospel*. As generations we are called by Christ in our differences, with our differences, and for our differences. On one hand, the gospel produces both unity and diversity among us. On the other, we seek both unity and diversity for the sake of the gospel.

My heart and vision is to see each and every generational river always flowing into Elim Grace. As one river. Towards that end, and to give you (and your generation) a voice, please consider taking two minutes to fill out a survey of six questions that I've prepared. I believe this survey could help me and our leadership better serve each generation in Elim Grace.

OUR PRAYER TARGETS

Remember, *prayer is the work important to all our work*. We are learning to pray as a congregation. God is *calling* us to pray as a congregation. So as we continue to walk in obedience to Him, here are this month's prayer targets to help us all pray together as one:

1. ***An awakening in the hearts of new attendees, guests, disciples*** - we are consistently seeing new people in all of our weekend services. Let's pray that God would do for them and in them what He has done for us and in us.
2. ***Peace for those with anxiety and depression*** - there are without question those in our midst who fight against anxiety and depression (and more.) Let's hold them in our hearts and pray that Elim Grace would become a safe place for them to find help and healing.
3. ***Unity among the generations*** - 2020 will be a year of unity. I believe Elim Grace will become a place of unity, a place where those far apart from one another and from God can be united and find joy, hope, love, and peace. The grace of God breaks down walls that separate. But what God wants to do through us, He first wants to do in us.