



Eden
Baptist Church

young
adults



THE **YOUNG ADULTS FELLOWSHIP**

OF EDEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Single adults are one of the fastest growing demographics in America. Only 2% of the adult population was single in 1900. Today that figure is nearing 40%. Young married couples are generally waiting longer to have children. These societal trends are reflected in the growth of EBC, commending the articulation of a philosophy for ministering to, and through, young adults who do not currently have the responsibilities inherent to marriage and/or child-raising.

Single adult ministries in many evangelical churches today are structured primarily to provide social fulfillment. To combat loneliness and to encourage marriage among singles, many such ministries are weighted to provide entertainment, adventure, and opportunities to “hang out” with other singles. Ministries to young married couples are often similarly designed.

A major weakness of this common approach is that it is self-focused. Group activities are based primarily on the felt needs and desires of the members with little or no thought given to people outside the group. This inward gaze tends to isolate young adult groups from the rest of the assembly. Such segregation weakens the church and also stifles the spiritual growth of the young adult.

What is the Mission of Our Young Adult's Ministry?

The mission of the young adult's fellowship of EBC is to encourage singles and young married couples without children to glorify God by loving him and others with all their heart. To this end the young adult's fellowship seeks to provide opportunities for:

- active service as the body of Christ
- spiritual edification as disciples of Christ
- evangelization of those separated from Christ

Why Emphasize Service?

Active service to others is God's design for the local church.

- *According to Ephesians 4:11-16, Jesus desires local churches to equip believers by means of biblical instruction in order to fulfill works of service. The goal is not to generate busyness. The goal is that by gaining knowledge of Christ and serving others, the local church will mature in the faith and progress in unified conformity to the image of Jesus. Knowledge of Christ and active service as a unified body is a process whereby the church body matures in Christ.*
- *This passage commends a young adult's ministry that is outward-oriented and vitally connected to, and integrated with, the larger body of Christ.*

God issues to singles a unique call to active service.

- 1 Corinthians 7:20-35 presses the point that singleness provides an extraordinary opportunity for single-minded investment in the cause of Christ.
- In contrast to married couples, singles are free from the complicating concerns and distractions inherent to marital relationships. Singles are at far greater liberty to invest undivided attention in the work of God.
- Married couples are more divided in their service to Christ than are single adults. However, a married couple without children is perhaps closer in ministry capacity to singles than they are to married couples with children.

Serving others is a powerful antidote to the unique pitfalls of singleness.

- Serving others in active obedience to Christ counteracts the loneliness and self-absorption that so naturally characterizes singles. Those who genuinely place the interests of others ahead of their own interests, will experience joy and fulfillment as Jesus did when he set this model for us (John 13:1-5, 12-17; Phil 2:3-5).

Meaningful relationships are forged when people serve side by side.

- Serving Jesus with another believer provides a unique opportunity to see the character of that person in action. Routine, mutual ministry activities provide a healthy environment in which men and women can “see below the surface” and learn to appreciate others for more than outward appearance and charismatic personality which are afforded such inflated value in purely social settings or dating relationships.

What Means Do We Use in the Pursuit of Our Mission?

The young adult’s fellowship of EBC seeks to serve and edify the body of Christ and to evangelize the lost by use of the following means:

- *Sunday Afternoon Fellowships:* We organize ourselves to systematically host fellowship meals with families in the church so as to serve and edify others, to gain wisdom from those whose life-orientation is distinct from ours, and to actively integrate our lives with the larger body.
- *Service Activities:* Projects are scheduled in which we lend physical service to others. Included are projects such as helping a family paint their home, rake leaves, clean windows,

etc. This may involve assisting the needy or elderly in some way, or simply blessing one of our church families or neighbors. Involvement in the semi-annual, all-church work days is another important service activity.

- *Church Ministries:* As God opens the door, young adults are encouraged to find involvement in such ministries as Sunday School, small group discipleship, Vacation Bible School, Nursery, choir, ministry activities, etc.
- *Church Fellowships:* It is vital for young adults to participate in all-church activities. Men’s Breakfast, Women’s Brunch, Winter and Summer Retreats, work days, etc, provide crucial opportunities to develop mutually edifying relationships with other church members.
- *Evangelistic Outreach and Missions Trips:* Active evangelism is encouraged with a particular emphasis on engaging individuals in one-on-one Bible study. Emphasis is also placed on inviting unbelievers to participate with the group so as to see the love of Christ in action. The young adult’s fellowship periodically organizes a trip to assist another ministry in the advance of the gospel.

Concluding Remarks

- The young adult’s fellowship of EBC longs to exalt Jesus Christ and to grow in our relationship with him. If our orientation is primarily social, participation in this group will hinge on self-interest. But if our orientation hinges on our mutual love for Jesus, this transcendent relationship will bind us to one another in love and allow us as a group to edify the body of Christ.
- It follows on the preceding point that we must ever seek to blend with and to encourage the entire assembly. Each of us should seek to edify the children of the assembly. We should

seek meaningful friendships with older folks. We should seek wisdom from those who are more mature in the faith than are we. We should work shoulder-to-shoulder with others. We must learn to value the vital involvement of godly church members in our lives—to seek and to welcome accountability and spiritual guidance. Young adults who attend only young adult activities fail to benefit from vital involvement in the body of Christ. The inevitable result is spiritual anemia.

- We must remember that life as citizens of God's kingdom is not all about us. Whatever we can do to keep our focus on Jesus and others will help us avoid the snare of self-orientation and disinterest in others which is so radically averse to the spirit and will of Jesus (Matt 22:34-40).