

Adopting a Group

Titus chapter 2 talks about older women training younger women. When we studied this passage we extended this idea to the possibility of older men training younger men. When this was preached at church¹ younger people were encouraged to talk to older people in accordance with this Scripture. One of my friends (an “older” man) made himself available for this by not gravitating to his peers after church but looking to see if he could engage in conversation with someone younger. Nothing happened. After church people tend to look to their peers to catch up on what has been happening in their lives. Whatever was said during the sermon may be tucked away somewhere and the application might come out at some stage but immediately after church there are more important things to do, or so it seems.

This “older people training younger people” thing may happen in a family situation but I don’t think it happens much at church. But one Bible study group has done it by “adopting” another group. It started with two women, one older and one younger, chatting at a women’s convention. The conversation drifted onto Bible study groups i.e. how was each group going, who were the leaders, what happens on an average night, what did you think of the set booklet etc. Later the older lady and her group (people in their 50s and 60s) invited a younger lady and her group (people in their 20s) to come over for a meal. The older lady was used to having large groups over for meals so it wasn’t too difficult to arrange.

So the meal was organised and during the night there was much discussion about all sorts of things which included some stuff on Bible study groups. It was a continuation on the discussion at the women’s convention but with a wider group of people. The conversation was fruitful. Both groups benefitted. The younger people asked for prayer and continual contact with the older group. The older group were only too happy to help and listen to things from a different perspective.

Once or twice a year the two groups could join and have a big Bible study together. Occasionally groups are disrupted by men only or women only events on the night that people usually have their Bible study meeting. Say there is a men only event. This is an opportunity for the women from the 2 groups to get together and have a combined women only Bible study. Or visa versa if there is a women only event. Also, letters of encouragement can be sent between the two groups. You can have a bit of fun with it by copying Paul’s style of letter writing e.g. “From the servants of Christ Jesus in Ocean Street to the holy and faithful brothers and sisters in Lisle Street: Grace and peace to you from God our Father. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love you have for all the saints.”

This is not a formal “older people training younger people” thing but a much more natural way to learn from each other in a comfortable and fun environment while making new friends. It’s like learning when you don’t realise you are learning. Maybe this is the best way to learn.

1. What I mean by church is that organisation you go to, usually on a Sunday, where you sing hymns or songs, someone reads from the Bible, someone preaches for about 30 mins, someone prays etc. – you get the idea. If “church” is a gathering of Christians (= *ekklesia*) then what we do in a Bible study group is also church but in common language it’s not described that way. For the purpose of this document I will make the distinction by using “church” and “Bible study group” as completely different things.