

In Their Voices: Young Adults Talk About the Church

Most churches and denominations recognize the need for effective ministry to young adults. Church and ministry leaders seek ways to keep them involved during the transitions of young adulthood. Read the responses of some of young adults to learn what keeps them involved in the church and how influential their families were.

Statistics indicate that young adults are leaving the church in masses. What keeps you involved in the church?

- My church is my family, and that's a strong tie. I'm in charge of one ministry, involved in another, helping me feel connected. I will, also, admit that it has been a struggle for me. There are days I want to walk away from my church and not look back.
- The thing that keeps me involved in the church is knowing that I am important to the church. Relationships don't hurt too much, either.
- A supportive and accepting relationship with my pastor! I'm at an age where I have a lot of questions about the church and faith that are not typical questions. The openness of my leaders has made me feel like it is safe to think about things.
- I am involved in the church because I have submerged myself in ministry opportunities and formed relationships with those who put time and effort into me.
- My church has programs which involve young adults. We are also asked to assist with children's and youth ministries, giving us a chance to serve.
- Since there is nothing for my age, I feel the closest connection is the youth group. I know what they go through having youth pastors come and go in their NYI lifetime. I am determined to be a constant person during these important years.
- Because we are called to submit ourselves to the accountability and responsibility of a church community, I submit myself to a community of believers for growth, discipleship, love, communal worship, admonishment, and transformation.

What role did your family and children's and teen activities play in developing and maintaining your Christian life?

- It was great. I was involved in church all the way through my life. It had a big role on my Christian faith.
- My family and youth ministry played a huge role in my spiritual development! The constant support kept me hooked in!
- Huge. This is why I want to come to church.
- My family was a huge part in developing my Christian life. I grew up going to every children's and teen camps available. If the doors at church were open, my family was there. I saw my parents involved in every outlet that the church offered, from cleaning the building to driving the church bus to cooking for dinner events.
- Huge...my family was a major influence in my Christian life. I enjoyed the church's activities in Children's Ministries and NYI. However, I feel my family's influence was the greatest!

- They had a huge role. My parents, grandparents, and all of the Sunday School teachers, sponsors, and pastors have greatly affected my life and the person I am today!
- A monumental role. Christian family and background put me in the church whenever the doors were unlocked, and thus involved in all the activities available throughout childhood and adolescence. Now that I am older, I continue to be a member of the church because I need that community to help save my soul.
- A very important and solid foundation. Without them, I'm not sure where I would be today.

How effective was the church in meeting your needs following college graduation?

- Not at all. It was part of the reason I stopped going to church for a few years. It was one friend, and one amazing Sunday School teacher that brought me back.
- Not very effective at all. There was a huge gap between where I was as a college graduate and what the church had to offer. I did not fit in anywhere, and it didn't seem like anyone was making any effort to help me fit in anywhere.
- I have not graduated yet. I'm very confident that my transition into the "adult" community will be a smooth and positive experience. The young adults at my church are very connected to the college students so the transition isn't so intense.
- To give an honest answer, not effective at all. As a recent graduate, moving back to the town and church I grew up in, I struggled finding my place. The church knew I was back in town, but no one made the effort to connect with me or made me feel welcomed back. I would go to church once every two months (out of conviction for not going) say hello to those I knew, and walk out alone, not to come back again for another eight weeks. Where was the church for three years of my life when they knew I was there?
- Right after college, I took a job that made it impossible to attend services for several months. I really missed the fellowship and worship. When I returned to my home church, everyone my age was gone so I hung out with the teens, sometimes.

Then I moved and started attending a church with small groups. My group had people my age and people old enough to be my parents. I felt connected and they recognized my potential and encouraged me to get involved. They gave me gifts when I got married. All of this was very effective and has won my devotion.