

# EQUIPPING

for intergenerational ministry

## What is Intergenerational Ministry?

### Intergenerational ministry

On any given Sunday we can look around our local church and see babies, children, young people and adults gathered to worship God. It is one of the only places in Western society where all generations are present. Each generation is a gift to the others. The young bring their energy and questions; the mature model wisdom and share their experience. All generations stand before Christ as equal recipients of God's grace.

Surprisingly in our congregations today, many young people never experience the gift of engaging with the older generations. Children and young people are often siloed into a ministry program with their peers. They have age-specific teaching and little engagement with the wider church community.



### What is intergenerational ministry?

Intergenerational ministry is difficult to define because it is a philosophy of ministry rather than a program—a way of being rather than doing. Its goal is to strategically build significant and meaningful interactions between the generations within the structures of a congregation.

The key components of intergenerational ministry are interaction and intentionality. Intergenerational ministry is more than bringing the generations into proximity with one another.

Intergenerational ministry takes place when people from at least two generations intentionally gather for the same activity with one another in ways that reflect a shared experience.

**‘Intergenerational ministry occurs when a congregation intentionally brings the generations together in mutual serving, sharing or learning within the core activities of the church in order to live out being the body of Christ to each other and the greater community’** Intergenerational Christian Formation - Allen and Ross.



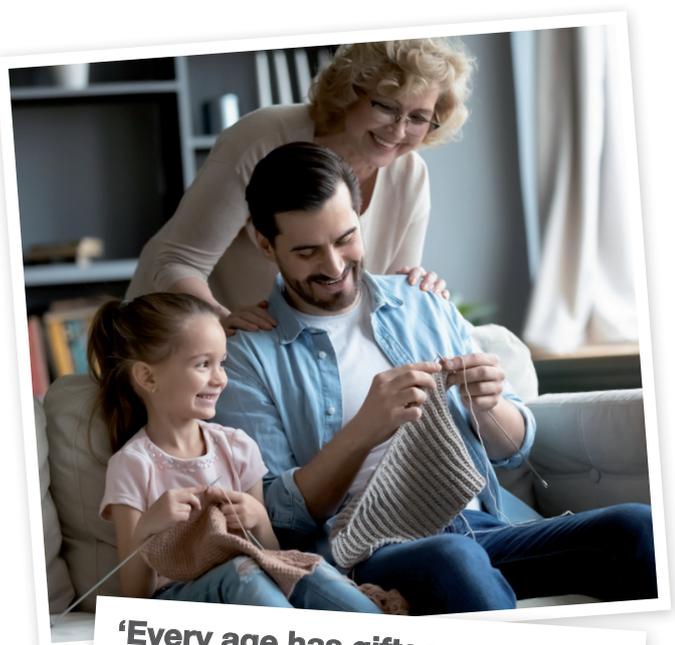
## The biblical foundation

Intergenerational ministry celebrates the wonderful biblical truth that all people, and especially young people, are valuable and important members of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:4-5). Children need the adult members of the Body of Christ to grow as fruitful, persevering members. Likewise, adults need young people to grow as fruitful, courageous members.

**‘When generations collide, the ensuing conflict reminds everyone that the Church is not just about me. Who knew the church could be the cure to narcissism?’**

Chad Hall.

Intergenerational ministry embraces and enacts the command to older generations to have a significant role in partnering parents in the growing of faith in the young. Titus 2:1-2 calls older men and women to intentionally build relationships with the younger generation. Psalm 78:4 calls the whole people of God to tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord.



**‘Every age has gifts we need and every age has needs we gift’**

Rich Melheim.

## The practice of intergenerational ministry

Intergenerational ministry is about culture change and begins with congregations making intentional intergenerational relationships a core value of their church. This is a value that is taught, prayed for and celebrated.

Intentional intergenerational relationships become a key goal for different ministry gatherings.

The second step is to assess all current individual ministry programs and groups through the lens of intergenerational ministry, identifying opportunities for engagement and storytelling.

Every ministry program, from Sunday worship to small groups, children’s ministry to youth group, provides an opportunity to intentionally bring generations together. Remember our goal is not proximity but engagement.

Intergenerational ministry is further developed by creating new opportunities for the generations to serve together. There are so many opportunities; from youth leadership teams, to intergenerational music teams to special projects the church undertakes.

Serving together levels the ground for intergenerational relationships to grow.

To become a life-giving intergenerational spiritual community;

- Cultivate relationships across generations,
- Engage all ages and generations in worship,
- Be a community immersed in prayer.

Intergenerational ministry seeks to embrace and capitalise on the gift each generation provides to the other in God’s church.

There are so many opportunities to build intentional interactions between the generations in our churches.