

Position statement for the Youth Ministry at Gospel Baptist Church

The youth ministry at Gospel Baptist church is a **platform** which provides an environment for **spiritual growth** and **opportunities to serve** the Lord for teens in our community and church, as well as a place for teen evangelism.

What responsibility does the parent of a teen have? Parents have the primary responsibility to train their teens, and the youth group the secondary responsibility. The Bible instructs parents to "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6) The youth ministry then serves to **reinforce** the Biblical instruction received at home or in the case of an unsaved family, **supplement** what the teen has missed at home

Our goal then is to encourage teens, primarily through preaching, teaching, and implementing of God's word through service ministries.

What are the steps to this goal for the teens? **First**, God desires a personal relationship with every teen. (Salvation) The Apostle Peter wrote that the Lord "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:19) **Secondly**, God desires for teens to surrender their lives to Him. (Sanctification) Paul wrote to the church at Rome: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2) **Thirdly**, after surrendering to God's will He desires that His will then be completed in each teen by life experiences. Paul again writes: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6) (Testings/Trials)

What about those teens who reject our efforts? We realize that not every teen will obey God's will for their lives. Jesus said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and **few** there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13,14) Jesus also declared that only a few of the majority of Christians will serve Him with their lives: "Therefore said he unto them, the harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. (Luke 10:2)" Thus, in every **average, normal**, and should I say **healthy** youth group there should be teens of **multiple growth levels**. There should be teens that are lost in the youth ministry. There should be teens that are living for Jesus in the youth ministry, and certainly there always will be those who are simply backslidden.

What about the mature teens, what is their function in our youth group? We encourage the teens who are living for Christ to be "**an example of the believer**" (I Timothy 4:12) and to encourage others by positive peer pressure. The reality of the matter is every one of these young folks must someday live among the righteous, the wicked, and the indifferent. We pray that each teen will "walk in truth" (3 John 1:4)

What really determines each teen's outcome? What truly makes the difference in each teen's life is their **decision to follow Christ or not**. Jesus said "If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (Mat 16:24)

Examples of the truth of individual choice in spite of circumstances: In the Garden of Eden, Adam chose to sin against God and you remember who his parent was? With the first parents after the fall, Cain chose to kill Abel. Solomon, who had King David as a parent, and was given

more wisdom than any man, chose to serve strange women and false gods. Yet we see that Joseph, in wicked Egypt, chose to serve God and, Daniel, in the pagan land of Babylon “purposed in his heart” (Daniel 1:8) not to defile himself and served God.

What 27 years in youth ministry at Gospel has taught us. We have seen young people from difficult homes choose Christ and live for him, while those from “seemingly” ideal homes choose the world and betray Jesus like Judas. No matter what the environment, a young person must decide “whom he/she will serve”. If the Lord’s ways are chosen, a successful Christian life is lived and righteousness reaped. If a young person chooses not to follow the Lord, no matter how good the environment, they will reap their unrighteous deeds. As we have made our choice to follow the Lord, so must every teen that comes into the youth ministry. No human can make this choice for them, and no environment can make it for them; they make that decision freely from their own prerogative.

So what is the purpose for having a youth ministry at Gospel? The youth ministry provides ample opportunities for teens both to learn of Christ and serve Him. Teens **learn of Christ** through weekly Sunday school lessons prepared for their age group, Wednesday night youth group where they hear God’s word preached, monthly youth activities where teens fellowship with other churches and are challenged from the Bible, summer camp, where teens can get away to hear some of the greatest evangelists and preachers in the country, teen retreats, where they are challenged to live for God in their homes and in their schools, and every Sunday morning and night they “get to” hear God’s man preach from the Bible at our main church services. Beyond hearing of Christ, the teens then have the **opportunity to minister** in song each month in the nursing home ministry. Furthermore, each year, we assist in feeding the poor at the Ft. Myers Rescue mission. Annually, we travel to baseball games, basketball games, and the July 4th parades to pass out tracts. Teens are encouraged to get involved in door to door visitation, V.B.S. ministry, bus ministry, choir, orchestra and the AWANA ministry. The youth ministry also motivates and rewards teens that are faithful to certain goals in attendance, outreach, Scripture memory and service opportunities.

We are thankful for this opportunity to serve the Lord by serving your young people. Our hope is that we can help and encourage you as you strive to train them to follow Jesus. We need your help, patience, and understanding as we “wrestle not against flesh and blood” and encounter great resistance in this ministry. Team with us, and hold our hands up in prayer as we push your kids to the “light”.

By His Grace,
The Pastors