

**Ice Breaker:**

Pastors have created a climate which guarantees their job security. They have simply taken over most of the ministry responsibilities, such that the church can't get along without them. Have you been a silent partner, who passively allowed the pastor(s) to do this? Discuss what you should do to change it. Today, we will discuss what the Bible says about our role in partnership with all the believers and the pastors.

**Big Ideas:**

It does not matter what you think about yourself regarding inadequacies or imperfections you may have (Remember the video clip from Sunday AM?), everyone has a role to play in the Body of Christ, the local church. God has designed the Kingdom of God in such a way that when the Holy Spirit comes to you, the Spirit brings a gift or gifts for you to use in helping to build-up the Body of Christ.

**Dialogue on what Pastor Joe shared:**

Read Ecclesiastes 12:1-4 below from the New Living Translation:

**<sup>1</sup> Don't let the excitement of youth cause you to forget your Creator. Honor him in your youth before you grow old and say, "Life is not pleasant anymore."<sup>2</sup> Remember him before the light of the sun, moon, and stars is dim to your old eyes, and rain clouds continually darken your sky.<sup>3</sup> Remember him before your legs—the guards of your house—start to tremble; and before your shoulders—the strong men—stoop. Remember him before your teeth—your few remaining servants—stop grinding; and before your eyes—the women looking through the windows—see dimly.<sup>4</sup> Remember him before the door to life's opportunities is closed and the sound of work fades. Now you rise at the first chirping of the birds, but then all their sounds will grow faint.**

Pastor Joe spoke primarily to the youth of our church and challenged them to take advantage of the strength and vitality of youth. He talked about there being an open door of opportunity from the Lord and their need to walk through the door(s).

Share about a time when you had an open door of opportunity that you sensed was a nudge or a word or a call from God, and you either walked through the open door or failed to do so. What were the consequences? Are there regrets? Are there ongoing blessings? Looking back, would you do something differently?

**Dialogue on what Pastor Tyler shared:**

Read the following selected verses, which paint the story of Mark.

**Acts 12:25 -<sup>25</sup> When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission to Jerusalem, they returned,<sup>[a]</sup> taking John Mark with them. Acts 13:13 -<sup>13</sup> Paul and his companions then left Paphos by ship for Pamphylia, landing at the port town of Perga. There John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. Acts 15:36-40 -<sup>36</sup> After some time Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing."<sup>37</sup> Barnabas**

agreed and wanted to take along John Mark.<sup>38</sup> But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work.<sup>39</sup> Their disagreement was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus.<sup>40</sup> Paul chose Silas, and as he left, the believers entrusted him to the Lord's gracious care. Colossians 4:10 -<sup>10</sup> Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas's cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way. Philemon 1:23-24 - Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings.<sup>24</sup> So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my co-workers. 1 Peter 5:13 -<sup>13</sup> Your sister church here in Babylon sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark.

Trace the changes in the story about Mark, from the beginning of being mentored by Paul and Barnabas. Talk about the attitudes of Barnabas and Paul over the years. The most dramatic change came in Paul. Is it possible that you might need to ask the Lord's help to adjust your attitudes towards the youth of today in a similar manner as Paul? In every generation there ARE youth of deep faith and great potential and they need MENTORS. Is there a role for you in this?

Dialogue on what Pastor Les shared:

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11

**1 Corinthians 12:4 – There are difference kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 7 – A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. Romans 12:6 - In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with...much faith.... 7 If your gift is serving others, serve ... well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. 1 Peter 4:10 God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 11 Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.**

Many Christians start the discussion about spiritual gifts by declaring what they don't have or cannot do: wrong starting point. Many Christians start with their fears or insecurities. We should talk about what the Holy Spirit has given each one. Knowing that Christians do not retire, we should ask: If there is an unmet need in the church, who among us should be meeting it? Am I the one? Is our group the one? Is our household the one? If there is an unmet need for workers, helpers, prayers, mentors, teachers in Family Ministries, should you step forward, based on what the Holy Spirit empowers you to do? Are you/we bringing glory to God through our service to Jesus and in His name?