

Seven Ways Teens Can Contribute When the Church Meets

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“How can I participate right away in the church?”

That was a wonderful question to hear from a teenager who recently became a believer and joined our church. I don't remember my exact answer, but I have since thought about that question primarily as it relates to teenage believers at church meetings.



Teenage believers, you can contribute right away in significant and helpful ways when the church gathers. Here's how:

1. Greet people.

Instead of always grouping up with your friends upon arrival, mix in with all the believers, say “hello” with a smile, shake hands, and hug an older lady or two—they'll love it! This kind of welcoming spirit is Christ's will (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14; etc.), and your friendliness will bring warmth and unity to the church.

2. Help young parents with their little children.

Young parents might have had a difficult time just getting there, so when you come over and take that child off mom's hip (staying within sight of the mom) so that she can get herself and the other kids settled in, she will rejoice. Even taking just 15 or 20 minutes after the meeting and playing with a toddler is a way to free up that mom and dad to get a little more fellowship than they would have experienced if they had to keep a constant eye on their little one.

3. Participate eagerly in the main weekly meeting.

When it's time to sing, do so joyfully. When the Bible is being read and taught, listen attentively. As a Bible teacher, I'm often heartened as I look out and observe young people sitting up with their Bibles open, even making eye contact with me.

4. Speak up in Bible studies and prayer meetings.

Don't think that only grown-ups have valuable insights in an interactive Bible study. You are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit who gives light to all

believers as they meditate on Scripture. Go ahead and voice your thoughts. They really matter and will edify the group. And when you have the opportunity to pray, go for it. It might be a little scary at first, but everyone in that meeting loves you and, more importantly, God loves you and is so pleased when you speak to him.

5. Give financially.

Don't tell me you don't have any money! I know what Grandmas put in cards on birthdays and at Christmas. And if you have a job, there's no question that you have something to give. But don't think of this in a wrong way—as a forced, painful activity that will have you saying, “Well, since I'm a Christian, I guess I have to do this.” On the contrary, giving is a delight to the believer. As Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Giving is a strategic, joy-filled way to take part in loving those in need and advancing the gospel.

6. Serve in less glamorous ways.

In Romans 16, Paul mentions a couple of hard workers in the church in Rome—Mary (v. 6) and Persis (v. 12). We don't know what they did specifically to earn that reputation, but they exhausted themselves in service to the church. How can you follow their example? You could arrive early and help with the set-up. If the meeting included a meal, grab a wet rag and wipe down the tables, and take out the trash. Basic acts of service like this aren't glamorous, but they honor Christ just as much as a sermon or a solo.

7. Reach out to the younger children.

They look up to you. They think you are cool and funny. What matters now, since you are a believer, is that they know you care for them. So talk to them. Find out what they did last week. Play with them. And eventually ask, “Can I tell you a neat story from the Bible?” They just might listen to you! And this budding relationship might lead to you arranging to meet up with a few of these younger kids once a week for a few weeks so that you can read the Bible with them. For a while, you'll be their hero, but hopefully they'll come to know the true hero, Jesus Christ. Your participation in their lives might matter for eternity.