Youth Leaders Equipped

Four12 29 October 2020



On the 16th and 17th October 2020, over 175 youth leaders from across Four12 partnering churches in South Africa came together in Cape Town for the RSA Youth Leaders Equip. It was amazing to see people from all over the country worshipping God together, being equipped for the things that God has called us to, and being changed for good in what felt like a mini-Four12 Global Conference.

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Called to Lead Youth

In the first session, Andrew Selley encouraged us that in this generation, where things are becoming more and more secular, God is raising up shepherds and we are those shepherds God is calling to lead the youth. We, as leaders, are being called to lead these teens so that they may be able to stand against peer pressure, and as they go on to universities or colleges (the most secular of areas), that their swords will be sharp and their armour strong.

Youth Integrated into Church Life

From Lance McIntosh, we heard that we need to build momentum in these young people's lives that will keep them running for years. It's always good to be reminded that youth is only a part of the journey. The ultimate goal is always to get each teen slotted into the local church, not just coming on a Friday evening.

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Hebrews 13:12 speaks of the price Jesus paid for each of us, which means He paid that price for each of these 'youthies' in our care. Matthew 18:3-6 speaks of the importance of not leading them astray. These two verses, along with Lance's teaching, made me ask some questions of myself; questions that might not always be comfortable. Questions like, 'Do I know the people in our youth?', 'Where are they in their walk with Christ?' and 'What struggles are they facing?'

Know Them By Name

A big question that came up throughout the conference was, 'Do we know their names?' This isn't just for the youth leaders but for the elders and leaders in the church as well. Are the names of our teens known by people in the church? It is imperative that we integrate the youth into the church by connecting them to the elders in their congregations, because they will ultimately be held accountable for their lives. It's a big one to think about.

I was challenged (and I'm certain I'm not speaking just for myself) to make certain that at the end of my youth race I will be able to say that I gave my very best. I knew who they were and I didn't lead them astray but instead led them to the Father, all the while having fun!

Being Fun-tentional

That's where Konrad Vosloo's voice comes to mind! He shared some great stories and ideas of being 'fun-tentional'. Fun-tentional, we learnt, is being intentional with the fun activities or ideas we use to grab the attention of our teens and then ultimately grab their hearts for Christ.

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Setting An Example

The final session with Lorna Baker was equally challenging, going in-depth about the problems teens are facing more and more in this time, and how we as leaders need to fight these battles alongside them. We need to deal with these things in ourselves, especially as we are the forerunners, the ones they look up to. What example are we setting for the youth? When leaders step into the light and are vulnerable, they pave the way for others to do the same. Fighting these battles while you are still young is so important and can save so much grief in the future.

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> **thought it was only for adults.**

Youth for me in my Christian walk has played such a huge part in getting me to where I am today. For example, I experienced God's presence for the first time at a youth camp, where previously I thought it was only for adults. I have had so much breakthrough in youth meetings. It's literally from youth leaders creating a space where we as a family can rub off on each other, learn, grow, get equipped for the future, and at the same time be transitioned into the church.

Changing Nations

A great example of this was given in Andrew's preach: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (from Daniel 3) were young boys when they were taken from their homes to Babylon. There they stood firm in their faith, not compromising in anything. When they were given the ultimatum to bow before a false god or be thrown into the fiery furnace, they refused to bow. They stood up to a whole nation and were thrown into the fire. God saved them in the end, and the nation was changed.

For me, this time of equipping was a key time of training, preparing us to train the youth so that in 5 or so years' time they will be able to stand firm in God against their Babylon and turn a nation upside down for Him.

Miss out on the teachings from the Youth Leaders Equip, or keen to listen to them again? You can listen to them on YouTube here.