

You at the Table! | Laurie Beal

I watched a video on Facebook the other day that hit home. It was a focus group asking parents, each couple in the room at a separate time, the same questions as they were asking the kids later. They asked, "If you could have dinner with anyone on the planet, who would it be?" The parents all gave it some thought, and effort, as they mentioned multiple names, trying to choose. The grown ups all answered with names of famous people.

When the kids each went in to be interviewed, they repeatedly gave the same unexpected answer ...FAMILY! They would choose their parents and family, above all others, to eat with! The parents were overwhelmed with emotion when they watched the video of their kids answering.

We sometimes underestimate the TIME we spend with our kids. Kids NEED us, they crave our presence, they need our encouragement and they relish the TIME we spend with them. That's GREAT news in this era of so many distractions and evils trying to suck our kids in. We just need to step up to that opportunity, while we still can!

The teens at the GARAGE become OUR kids, too...And they also consider us family! It was a great reminder that all those times we sit around the counter at the cafe engaging with a teen, or do our annual thanksgiving dinner, or eat pizza alongside them on Wednesdays and Thursdays or sit with them on their lunch break at school, or take them out for a 1x1 lunch...all those efforts MATTER! We are always looking for new mentors to share their time and JESUS with teens. Maybe we are waiting for YOU at the table?!

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YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

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Why Do They Do That? | Steve Pausch

I was recently sitting with a community member to talk about our ministry. I was describing some recent meetings with teens who were talking about their life situations. Each situation seemed even more difficult than the last. He seemed surprised at how many students I worked with and how much I knew about their personal lives and situations. I explained how it was not just me, but the many adult leaders in each of our ministry sites who also get deeply involved in the lives of young people. He asked how often I left a meeting feeling down because of the things teens are going through. I have seen The Lord do some miraculous things in the lives of teens over the many years of ministry. We often rejoice at situations that seem hopeless that God turns around but, there are many heartaches involved with this ministry. His next question caused me to pause ... "Why do they do that, why do people join YFC to find out terrible things about kids and get depressed over and over again?"

My answer.... because God has called them to this work, and He is with us along the journey. This conversation did make me realize, again, what a vital role the men and women God has placed into our organization. These committed, caring adults are willing to put their own emotions aside in order to help teens navigate the rushing waters of life and hopefully get them to follow Jesus for eternity. This is a tough job, but I believe God has uniquely equipped each of them for the tasks at hand.

Thank you for making this tough work possible and for providing the prayers and financial support our leaders need to reach the lost and hurting teens of Northern Ohio.

Pray, Obey, Love & Repeat! | Scott Hulet

Here are some of the text messages that we received from one of our Garage kids over the past week:

I read your passage to me these messages mean a lot I've been doing some more research I'm starting to believe more and more I just don't know what's keeping me.

Thank you so so much scott you and your family are my world!

How do I give my life to God? I want to give my life to him right now I am ready I want to be part of His world I'm ready for it but how do I do it I want to make sure I'm serious in my heart I'm ready I just don't know how I feel like if I close my eyes and say this will I mean it but what if I don't know? If you understand I'm stuck right now.

Okay! Please send me more scriptures.. I want to believe!

It is gloriously exciting when we encounter kids who are asking sincere, spiritual questions, who are passionately seeking after God! But as is often the case in this ministry, we did not arrive at this point with this particular kid in days, weeks, or even months.

God graciously directed this girl to The Garage when she was in 7th grade. She was raised under the heavy influence of a non-Christian religion, and she also suffered through various forms of neglect and abuse. She suffers from depression and some other disorders as a result.

Over the years, we have been blessed with various opportunities to touch her life as well as the lives of some of her extended family. Even though she stopped coming to The Garage during middle school, we continued to encounter her in the community, at our YMCA events, and during our weekly visits to the MS and HS Lunch Periods. During all of this, we continued to pray for her (even with her on occasion) and reach out to her in friendship. We continued to share Truth with her and help her (and family) out as God provided opportunities. We continued to let her know we loved her and that God loved her so much more. A few weeks ago, just before her junior year, she suddenly began to respond to this steady stream of Love. She simply began to seek after God. She has started searching the Scriptures and asking questions. She has started attending church with our family and spending time with our family and other families in our church. She has started to share some of her deepest fears and burdens. She is beginning to realize that God is real, that He truly loves her, and that He is offering her the freedom, forgiveness, peace, and healing that are all wrapped-up in a no-kidding relationship with Him!

So, what's with the title of this article? :-) I saw a t-shirt the other day with those 4 simple words. and I began to think about this girl and the greatness of our God. She was not drawn to Christ through expensive ministry, excellent programs, persuasive arguments, etc. She simply began to seek after God after years of being prayed for, years of not being forgotten, years of receiving timely help, years of being genuinely pursued by people who love her because they are loved by God. We belong to a God who invites, even urges us to join Him in this daily mission to reach this lost world, a God who promises to work mightily through our daily trust/obedience. This Truth, empowered by His Spirit within us, will enable us to **PRAY, OBEY, LOVE, and REPEAT!**

Please pray for this precious gal as she continues to seek after our God!

New: Fremont Middle School Ministry | Doug Bryant

I was just in great conversation with some local youth pastors getting things rolling for a new middle school program we are starting. As I was meeting with one of these youth pastors, I was reminded again that Jesus "did not call us simply to maintain programs but to build relationships."

It is so true. Our programs are a means to be connected with teens, but we are also needing to stay vital in these programs. We need to stay innovative and creative through the Holy Spirit to help teens receive and live out salvation. This is why we are building new programs all the time. We need to be reaching different types of teens in different ways to be most effective.

We are kicking off a Middle School program in our area to specifically reach this age group. We are starting with an awesome Lockin on Nov. 9th with our speaker/rap artist iNTELLECT and many Christian adults who have a passion for this age group. Be praying for us as we build relationships, small groups, and mentoring with these teens!

First 5K | Keith Johnston

Abby & Blake are two of our kids from the Garage ministry site. They recently did something they had never done before..... they ran a 5K! We met both of these students during our night for middle schoolers at the Garage. They are both incredible kids, who deal with incredible obstacles. So, to see them run a 5K was incredible.

This all happened through a partnership opportunity with a group called Running2bWell. The program is based on research that shows how effective regular exercise can be in dealing with many challenges and how it can benefit attitude and confidence. It's been great to see how this program benefitted Abby & Blake by giving them confidence and opportunities to develop healthy relationships and work on goalsetting and perseverance. Congratulations to Abby & Blake! Thank you Running2bWell!

