

7 WAYS FOR NEXT GEN MINISTRIES TO APPROACH THIS UNIQUE SUMMER

The summer months are now here for next generation ministries, but it's a summer that looks and feels completely different than any other. In fact, I've heard many refer to this summer as an "eventless summer," meaning that many churches have canceled summer camps, Vacation Bible Schools and collegiate/student mission trips.

I want to encourage us, however, to look at this summer with optimism, because I believe we have an awesome opportunity to rethink the summer strategy and not simply focus on how different our summer schedules are. How we navigate these three calendar months can provide an opportunity to shape our ministries for years if not decades to come.

Here are seven ways for next generation ministries to approach this unique season in a way that could make this the most effective summer your ministry has ever experienced.

1. Keep the mission at the forefront

So much in our world has changed, and if we're not careful, we'll feel the pressure to focus solely on the need to radically change everything about our ministries. When we're restless, we want to tinker with things. We turn inward, and it's usually the mission that suffers the most. A lot has changed in our world, but not our calling. The coronavirus did not push pause on the

Great Commission. The mission always has to be our main focus.

2. Have healthy expectations

We really don't know what to expect. However, one thing we do know is that you can't take previous summers and lay them on top of this one and expect the same results. It's completely different, so don't beat yourself up or set your team up for let-downs by comparing to previous summers. This is a different reality. So, take this time as an opportunity to do some educating through celebrating.

You may not be able to do a lot of celebrating of grandiose numbers, but you can celebrate stories of students obediently sharing the Gospel, testimonies of salvation and examples of on-mission living. I learned this as a pastor: whatever I celebrated the most was what I was intentionally or unintentionally discipling our people to believe was most important. If we say the mission is most important, then we should celebrate the mission the most.

3. Kill the cows

What "sacred cows" can you barbecue? That is, what are some ineffective or unhelpful things you've wanted to get rid of for a while now, but were unable to in normal seasons? Think about it. You've been given a unique opportunity in these abnormal times to do what you could not do in normal times. Nothing else has been

immune to the coronavirus, so don't let unnecessary sacred cows be either.

4. Equip parents and legal guardians

Often, I am asked what I'd do differently if I could go back to my student pastor days. Without a doubt, I'd spend time, energy and resources on equipping the parents and legal guardians to be the evangelists and disciple-makers that God has called them to be for their kids. Parents have just experienced the longest spring break of their lives. They're looking for help.

Generation Z is largely being parented by older Millennials and Young Xers who were never disciplined themselves. As leaders, we're great at preaching to the

to reach the next generation with the Gospel, we will become diverse ministries.

6. Seek solitude

Most likely, your summer won't be as full as a typical summer, so allow yourself and your team the margin to seek solitude. Solitude is different from isolation. Isolation is unintentional time by yourself. Solitude is intentional time with the Lord in Scripture reading and prayer, where we grow spiritually. It's also typically where fresh vision, innovation and anointing comes. We're always going to be at our best when we minister, lead, serve and share Jesus from the overflow of our own worship of Him.

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parents, “You need to disciple your kids! You're their primary pastors.” And they are replying back, “Yes! I agree. I want to, but I don't know how. Help me.”

5. Focus on cultivating your ministry to reflect the community

Honest evaluation — do our ministries look like our communities? If not, then we have to figure out what bridges we can build and what barriers we can remove. According to Pew Research Center, 48 percent of Generation Z is non-white. They are by far the most diverse generation alive. If we're going to be intentional

7. Don't rush back to normal

Personally, I've found myself saying over and over again in recent months, “I can't wait to get back to normal.” Then, one night it hit me like a ton of bricks. What if the last thing the Lord wants is for us to go back to normal? At the end of the day, we don't need normal. We desperately need revival and renewal.

“Look, I am about to do something new; even now it is coming. Do you not see it? Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert” (Isaiah 43:19). 



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