

How to Add Value to Your Pastor as a Young Adult Leader

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Young adult leaders are typically “second-chair” leaders. While we may lead our own ministry areas, we often serve as staff members or volunteers. This creates unique challenges in developing our ministries. Sometimes, there is distance between us and the lead or executive pastors since volunteer leaders may not be part of staff meetings or gatherings. Young adult ministry is often viewed as important but auxiliary—it’s not a primary component of the weekend service like worship, children’s ministry, or youth ministry. I’ve talked with many young adult leaders who wish they had closer relationships with key leaders. So how can a young adult leader gain more attention and focus for their ministry?

While you can’t control whether or not a leader chooses to invest in you, you can influence their engagement. You can take the initiative and intentionally add value to the church and to the leaders around you.

Early in ministry, I learned that when I added value to a leader’s life, they added value back to mine. In Bible college, our school hosted an evangelism training conference attended by dozens of pastors and leaders. For three days, I skipped classes, brought people coffee, carried bags, and made photocopies. In return, I had the opportunity to listen to, pray with, and learn from amazing men and women. My first ministry position came from a man I met during that time, and I still maintain friendships with those leaders. Why did I make those connections? Because I added value to them.

If you want your pastor or another leader to invest in you and build a relationship with you, add value to their life. Here are some ways to do that.

See What Others Don’t See

When you walk into a situation—whether it’s a job, classroom, or conversation—be alert. Learn to notice what others overlook. See needs and meet them. See broken things and fix them. See trash and throw it away. Always be watching and aware of what’s happening around you.

Carry a notebook and ask questions: “Why did you do this?” “Was that intentional?” Write down the responses you receive. “Why?” is the most important question you can ask.

Do What Others Won’t Do

If you see something that isn’t right, do something about it. The people who take the initiative are the ones who get promoted, receive raises, and earn trust. If there’s an area of the church that needs volunteers, get your young adults involved. At major events, take on the jobs no one else wants—and make them fun.

Give Up What Others Won't Give Up

The price you pay now will reward you later. Invest your time, energy, and money to gain the attention of those ahead of you in work, school, or ministry. Be the first to arrive and the last to leave. Spend your own resources so others can benefit. Work for others—not for credit, but to be known as someone who's willing to sacrifice.

Support the Vision of the Leader

While you may have a vision for your ministry, it must align with the overall direction of the church. If your vision or dreams conflict with the church or its leaders, you need to adjust. Don't compete for time or money. Don't hinder what the Lord wants to do through your church leadership. Be a supporter, not a detractor.

When You Get Time with a Leader, Don't Waste It

Resist the temptation to talk or give your opinion. Instead, ask thoughtful questions. Several years ago, I had the privilege of picking up John Maxwell and driving him to our church service. I had a 15-minute car ride with just the two of us. I asked my pastor for permission to ask Dr. Maxwell one question. I spent five days crafting that question with my pastor's help. When I picked him up at the hotel, he made small talk for a moment. Then I said, "Mr. Maxwell, I know you have your mind on today's service, but I probably will only be with a leader like you once in my life. May I ask you one question that can help me in ministry? If not, I understand."

He said, "Yes, go ahead." I asked my question. He replied, "I've never been asked that before—great question. Give me a minute to think about it." After a few minutes, he shared a life lesson I've never forgotten. After the service, he saw me, called me over, and said, "Randy, I've thought more about your question. Let me add this . . ." I was so glad I had prepared well and made the most of that moment.

When you get time with your leader, don't waste it.

Say Thank You

When a leader invests in you, express gratitude sincerely and in writing. When John Maxwell returned to his office that week, he received a thank-you card from me. It was short but specific: "Thank you, Dr. Maxwell, for helping me learn . . ." I repeated back to him what he had taught me.

Adding value to your leaders opens doors for growth, connection, and influence. When you serve faithfully, see what others miss, and support your leaders' vision, you not only strengthen your ministry—but also position yourself for God to do more through you.