

Leading the Next Generation Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part altogether, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What is one city you would like to visit?
2. What is one thing from your childhood that you miss today?

Read the following passage: 1 Samuel 8:1-9

Samuel was a great prophet, but his failure with his own sons made a significant impact on the entire nation. Samuel's decision to appoint his sons to be judges—seemingly without the Lord's direction—and his subsequent failure to correct their abuses became the catalyst for the people's rejection of God. The lesson is sobering: If we neglect our responsibility to lead in a godly way, then the next generation will suffer the consequences.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Do you find it challenging to “honor your father and your mother” (Exodus 20:12)? Why or why not? What does it look like to honor our parents without denying the reality of their weakness or failures? Are there any ways you need to heal from your experiences (or lack of experiences) with your parents? Explain.
2. Samuel saw Eli's failure with his sons but failed to act differently with his own sons. Why do you think it is often so difficult to break the patterns we have experienced in our families even when we know they are unhealthy or sinful? What should we do if we really want to see those unhealthy or sinful patterns broken?
3. Why do leadership failures so often impact how people respond to God? Has your faith been impacted by any leadership failures you have experienced in the church? Explain. How do we keep from sliding into disillusionment or cynicism when we are hurt by leaders or see leaders fail?
4. Read 1 Timothy 4:12-16. What happens when organizations, including churches, are led by people with character gaps? What happens when they are led by people lacking leadership skills? How would you rate your own character and your own leadership ability? Explain.
5. What is one way you can help someone in the next generation?

Pray