

Speaking to the soul



Blessings

The glory of the young is their strength; the grey hair of experience is the splendour of the old. Proverbs 20:29

Tension between the generations is not new. Aristotle, in the fourth century, commented: "When I look at the younger generation, I despair of the future of civilisation." Long after Aristotle's day, in 1237, a monk named Peter gave his reasons for despair when he looked at the youth of his day. He wrote: "The young people of today think of nothing but themselves. They have no reverence for parents or old age. They are impatient of all restraint. They talk as if they know

everything, and what passes for wisdom with us is foolishness to them.”

The truth is that in every age there is a huge gulf between the generations. Today’s proverb encourages us to look for the strengths of each age group. Everyone has something special to contribute. The young are unquestionably stronger than older people. But grey hair is a clear sign that the old have more experience of life. These are both wonderful gifts to be celebrated.

The Church is God’s way of bringing the different generations together for the edification of everyone. There is no question that there will be tensions between people of different ages. There will be different perspectives that don’t always sit easily with one another. You can hardly imagine a family of three generations all sitting together tapping their feet with pleasure as they listen to the same music! And yet, in church, we do seek to bring people together in worship - and that can be hard to achieve.

I love worship which intentionally embraces old and young. It doesn’t apologise for using a traditional hymn or the latest worship song but affirms that both are wonderful expressions of praise to God. Musically, there might be moments when we wince because the style isn’t our own, but we must graciously accept that - and rejoice that the hymn or song is a blessing to others.

At the end of the day, we have a choice. We can either moan about other generations and their shortcomings, or look for the different strengths, gifts and blessings that God has given to us.

QUESTION

What blessings does your own generation give to the life of your church?

PRAYER

Lord God our Father, thank you for the blessings that you give to each of us. Help me to value other people, whatever their age or background. Amen

