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Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate Bishopric of Youth

Bishop of Youth

We often feel that the youth meetings we organize for them do not achieve their objectives, whether as to the type of meeting, the extent to which it satisfies them and affects their hearts, or the extent to which it includes the young people in the area. That is why, with God's grace and guidance, we need to identify the qualities of the effective youth meeting so that we ensure their presence in our ministry and our lives from day to day.

1. The Door:

Our ministry to young people starts at the church door. We must not allow our secondary school or university students, with their sensitive feelings, enter and leave church without making their acquaintance. The young person must meet a responsible servant at the church door, who will get to know him, take his name and address, and promise to visit him soon.

Thus, we will be able to visit all the young people and inquire about the reason for their absence, or about a friend's absence, or about the visits he made to others as a school or college colleague, and so on.

2. The Meeting:

We often notice that young people shun our meetings, and the following are some causes that we should avoid:

- a. Not having a precise fixed time for the meeting making it difficult for young people to organize their time.
- b. Not leading the meeting in an organized and pleasing fashion. Prayers must be conducted in reverence, clarity and order so that they truly prepare the hearts of young people to listen to the word of God and so that the young people can experience the meaning of the presence of God and its work in their hearts. Singing hymns should also be done energetically and worshipfully.
- c. Not presenting a satisfying message, led by the Spirit of God and supported by the prayers of the speaker and the organizers of the meeting. The most dangerous thing is for the meeting to consist of an ineffective routine sermon that does not reach the depths of the young people, reveal their needs, or solve their problems. The subjects should be relevant to the lives of the youth who should be given the chance to ask questions, in writing or orally, and of organizing discussions on topics affecting their lives. We must

turn the person asking the question to the loving heart of Christ, and not delude him into thinking that we have the solution to all his problems. The direct experience of the Lord of Glory is better than a thousand questions and answers, pouring into the hearts of the young people a glorious light and granting them a secret key to all the issues of the age. This is in addition to the necessary close relation they should have with their father confessors for guidance along the way.

In summary, the successful meeting is the one attended by the Lord Jesus Christ without any hindrance. The hindrances are our negligence, our egotism, the lukewarm ness of our love for the Lord and for others, the lukewarm ness of our prayers, our ignorance of the nature of the age groups we are serving, or a combination of all of these.

d. Not providing the opportunity for a closing prayer that touches the hearts of the young people and opens them up to the Lord Jesus. This is vital, for if we succeed in getting the young people to the point where they open their hearts and talk to the beloved Savior directly during the closing prayer, this will be an incentive for fellowship with the Lord and a longing that continues throughout the week.

3. The Home:

This is a basic component of the ministry. We notice clearly how often the Lord emphasized the ministry to individuals: He met Nicodemus, visited Zacchias, stayed with the family at Bethany and was the best example ever when He walked for six hours to meet a woman shunned by all and ostracized by society.

In the homes we visit, we should not imagine that we are leaders and guides, but simply bearers of the vessels of the Lord reflecting His sweet image. When we sit at His feet with them as with the disciples of the Lord, and if we are filled from the overflowing spring of His fatherhood, the young people will experience the gentleness of Christ and will submit the direction of their lives to Him.

A visiting team should be organized and the area or district divided into geographical units. Lists should be drawn up from the information gleaned at the church door. This visiting team should meet once a week in fervent prayer and in order to follow up on the effectiveness of the work.

4. At School or College:

We can visit young people in school or college through a team of representatives of the school, college, and university groups at various levels. These are young people who worship regularly and are involved God's work.

These should be entrusted with calling their colleagues and submitting the names of those who are far, sending a small invitation card to those who absent themselves, and praying with us for the work,

5. At the Club:

The summer vacation often makes spiritual work a heavy burden instead of being the occasion for it, and the reason is that we lack an understanding of the mission of the

Christian club. We do not aim at putting together athletic teams of a high caliber, nor do we envisage opening the club doors wide open to attract the souls that are far off, for the young people who do not enter the house of God through the door of repentance will leave through another door.

That is why we should see the club as a spiritual place for the children of God to meet in love, friendliness, and enthusiasm. In it, they play because sports are one of the needs of youth, necessary for a healthy body and a wholesome outgoing personality. But above all, they need to build their spiritual life through useful studies and satisfying service.

- Summer is an opportunity for some young people to serve the Lord and to form a nucleus for the subsequent winter meetings.
- We therefore have to organize various studies in: church history, the Bible, Coptic, the Church chants, discussions on the effects of contemporary life on the individual, family, church, and at global levels, as well as discussions on spiritual issues, on psychology, education and culture.
- Retreat opportunities to appropriate places for a few days, given satisfying programs and sound leadership, can have a great spiritual, psychological, and social impact on the personality of a young person.
- Trips that have spiritual destinations, such as Christian monuments and nearby churches are helpful in this work

Thus, the ministry extends from the church door to the home, school, and club, making youth meeting involving and satisfying to young people.