



# THE PASTOR'S VOICE

Insights from Church Leaders

## **The Pastor's Voice Podcast: Episode 4**

### **Transcript: Strategies for Grandparents**

**Reuel Sample:** Who do you get more resistance from when you set up these ministries and churches? When we talk about this generational link, are our grandparents embracing this? Are the children embracing this or is the church saying, Oh, we need we need younger people to do all this? How are you reinforcing this generational link in churches?

**Steve Bradford:** What we find is that pastors and church workers generally get it. One of their goals and desires is to see younger families and even kids impacted and reached with the gospel and grandparents are a natural way to do that. So we don't see too much resistance from pastors. Other than that, they are so busy this season. A lot of them will say, Hey, you guys are right, we need to do this and let's pray for a leader within the church to step up and and do this. Grandparents, a lot of times will kind of get it, but they say, Hey, I'm a good grandparent. It's not that hard and I see my grandkids. I take them to school. I do all this, all the activities with them. I have a great relationship with them and we say, that's great and that's a very great thing to do. But there's more you want to be intentional about passing along that faith. And then there's just the opportunity for grandparents to to understand how culture has changed so much, you know, since we were growing up. And it's difficult sometimes for grandparents to understand well and what their grandkids are going through is they face gender issues in their schools and then talk to their grandparents about it. But grandparents have a lot of wisdom and a lot of openness, and prayer is the key thing.

**Reuel Sample:** You said that our culture is changing and it's changing amazingly and probably not good ways, but people don't change, and grandparents bring a perspective that is tempered by years.

**Steve Bradford:** Yes, exactly.

**Reuel Sample:** Our our kids right now, what they're facing in schools, I would not want to go to high school again if you paid me.

**Steve Bradford:** Yeah. All right. All right. It's it's scary and it's it's sobering to talk to grandkids and we hear, you know, hey, my granddaughter came home from school today and one of the girls in her class is now a boy. What's up with that? And you know, there's restroom issues and gender, and they are just facing so much and it's so prevalent on TV and just in culture around us that we as grandparents really need to be wise in order to guide them through this.

**Reuel Sample:** And I would imagine that grandparents also provide a buffer for kids that they can talk to their grandkids about things that if the kids went directly to their parents, their parents might go ballistic. But the grandparents can say, Well, let's let's do this together. We'll do, we'll do it that way. Is that part of your ministry?

**Steve Bradford:** Exactly. Yeah. And I don't know if that was your experience, but it sounds like you had a godly grandmother as well.

**Reuel Sample:** Grandma Sample is up there in heaven organizing things. So yes, she's doing very, very well. Steve, I try not to talk about COVID because everybody's done about talking about COVID. But the last two years certainly have had an impact on the relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren. Or maybe I'm wrong. What will be the long term impact of all this?

**Steve Bradford:** No, I think really it's a positive impact for the most part, although we lost, what, 18 months of some of that relational contact, in some cases, it really gave grandparents an opportunity to learn Zoom and FaceTime, and there are some apps on their phones now where they can communicate with their grandkids directly. So it gave grandparents an opportunity to use and learn technology for better communication

tools. And you know, one of the things that's changed over the last years is, I think you and I were talking before that. It used to be that you live near your grandparents, you saw them. But now with the transient society, it's probably the normal now to have grandkids that are states away. And so when you want to be intentional with grandkids who are a plane ride, you've got to figure out other things other than just seeing them two or three times a year. You've got to be able to use FaceTime or pick up the phone or some of these other apps that can keep that relationship on. So I think long term. It will be a positive, but it certainly was a difficult 18 months.

**Reuel Sample:** What are grandparents wrestling with today? What are what are the issues that are heavy on their heart that they that they're going to their knees in prayer that is making them weep as they talk to you or talk to their pastors?

**Steve Bradford:** Good question. I think really the main one is just for the salvation of our grandkids still, and that that'll probably never change as our grandkids grow up, as they go through the high school years as they face these things, which oftentimes you can't protect them from that you really need to go to your knees and pray for them. The other thing we're seeing that's just tragic is so many grandparents raising their grandkids now because of sometimes drug use, divorce and parents kind of get stuck with that. Here I'm going to retire, and all of a sudden they're faced with raising another two or three kids in their home and sometimes putting off that retirement so they can support them financially. And the other area is really there's the son or the daughter who says to their parent, the grandparent, Hey, you can see my grandson, my granddaughter, but you don't talk to them about God. You know, that's a decision that we want them to make at some later date, but don't bring it up in the house or you can't see them again.

**Reuel Sample:** And how do you how do you train your grandparents to deal with that?

**Steve Bradford:** That's difficult. We teach them, first of all, to pray and to, you know, that God is in control of people's hearts. Pray for your adult children and just for their openness and be ready for those opportunities. And you know, if if your kids were to say to you, I don't want you to bring up God when they're visiting or you won't be able to see them anymore, they're still strategies that you can do. And this is what we talk about in some of our seminars. You can put verses on the wall when you sit down for a meal. If

you can't pray out loud because it's forbidden, you as a grandparent can still bow your head and say a silent prayer. You can just use those intentional things during the day not to necessarily evangelize, but just to talk about or to show your grandkids that you are a Christian. And eventually, as they get older, that'll that'll come out. They'll have questions. Grandma, why do you close your eyes before you eat? Or you know what does that verse on your wall mean? What is that? Where do I find that? Why do you have these picture books here? And what's this big boat and what's the story there? So there are ways that you can do that.

**Reuel Sample:** Just even the fact of sitting down and having dinner is probably a powerful avenue in itself.

**Steve Bradford:** Yeah, exactly. I think you had said it before. The key thing is just to keep that relationship open, and as a grandparent, oftentimes you have the best opportunity to do that.

**Reuel Sample:** I also like your emphasis on prayer is that we often think, well, we've got to go do something that I've got to do something, but even the relationship between grandparents and grandkids. The first thing is prayer. This is an action of God. This is not an action of ourselves. This is this is saying, God, you've got this.

**Steve Bradford:** Yes, exactly. Yeah. And sometimes that's the hardest thing. I mean, it's it's easy to pray, but it's hard to just wait and be still,

**Reuel Sample:** Especially especially for we as Americans. We love being active. We like being out there doing something, and it's really tough no matter what age you are, to just sit back and pray.

**Steve Bradford:** Yeah. And I tell you, it's it's tough for grandparents as well, and you and I are both known people that as they age, they get that sense of urgency that my life is short. I've got to do something. I've got to make it count. You don't ever retire. And so even though there's a lot of wisdom, we still have to keep reminding ourselves if that has this and be patient.

**Reuel Sample:** What is your message for the family of Christ today? What do you want to tell people who are listening to this podcast?

**Steve Bradford:** I would say that it's really if you're a grandparent and God willing, most of us will be at some point have a strategy to be intentional about passing along your faith. Tell them the stories of how you came to know Christ and different times that you've seen God work in your lives. Make it make it very intentional, make it very active. Plan times around meal times or family vacations when you can pass along some of those things that you've learned and above all, don't. Don't panic. Just leave it up to God to, you know, to act in your grandchildren's lives and partner with grandparents in the local church. Support each other. This is how my wife and I started a grandparent in ministry here. We just started with the inviting grandparents over for prayer, and we made a list of our grandkids. And about once every two weeks we get together and just kind of talk about what are the challenges we have and we just pray for our grandkids. And it was an amazing comfort to be able to pray with these other grandparents and to know that they're praying for you. So there's a lot of comfort in just the fellowship.

**Reuel Sample:** And with your eight grandchildren, you are. You take up a significant portion of that prayer now.

**Steve Bradford:** It's funny the average. I just saw these statistics. The average number of grandkids among grandparents is four. And we have eight. But there are a lot of people in our church. And maybe this is Christians that they've got like 18, 19, 20 grandkids and stuff. And God love them. They just they are so happy and just seemed at peace when never stressed.

**Reuel Sample:** I come from a family of twenty four cousins, which means my Grandma Sample had twenty five grandchildren.

**Steve Bradford:** Yeah, yeah, it seems like it's a thing of the past.

**Reuel Sample:** Steve Bradford from Legacy Coalition at [legacycoalition.com](http://legacycoalition.com) Connecting grandparents and grandchildren for that generational link to carry on the message of Jesus Christ. Steve, thank you very much for joining us.

**Steve Bradford:** Hey, well, it's great to talk to you again. God bless you and this ministry that you've got and God just bless pastors, churches and grandparents all over.