

# 5 reasons millennial pastors aren't moving to larger churches

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Millennials are the second largest generation in America's history. At 74 million persons, they are only surpassed in size by the Boomer generation. Born between 1980 and 1997, they are shaping our businesses, our government and our culture.

And they are shaping our churches.

As a Boomer, I remember well how pastors were viewed just a few decades ago. In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the "successful" pastors made it to large county seat churches. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the measure of success was leading larger churches in general.

The times they are a'changin' (Bob Dylan, for the uninformed).

To be sure, there are still millennial pastors moving to larger churches. And these leaders are not averse to megachurches.

But more millennial pastors sense God's call to the smaller and mid-size churches. Why has their attitude been so different from their predecessors? I asked a number of millennial pastors, and here are five of the responses they gave me.

## 5 reasons

## **1. They want to invest their lives in a community.**

The millennial pastors, as a whole, are highly community focused. It takes several years to get to know a community and to be embraced by the community.

## **2. They want more stability for their families.**

To be fair, these leaders will not deny a call to another community or even another country if they sense God's call in that direction. But any move has to be convincing, convicting and compelling. I know. I moved my family four times in ministry. I am not sure I followed God as much as my own selfish ambitions.

## **3. They don't measure ministry success and fulfillment by numbers and size.**

These millennial pastors do indeed desire to reach more people. They truly want to make more disciples. But their worth and esteem are not measured by "nickels and noses."

## **4. They are financially locked into their homes.**

Many millennial pastors bought their homes when prices and mortgage rates were much lower. Even though they could sell their homes at a gain, they would have to put all of their gains into their next home, which is now higher priced. And most of them would have to pay a higher mortgage rate and, thus, have higher monthly payments.

## **5. They are leading church revitalization.**

They are sufficiently wise to understand the turnaround of a declining established church is a long-term endeavor. They are willing to make such commitments to win trust and lead revitalization.

# Different metrics

As with any generation, we must be careful with generalizations. There always are exceptions and differences. But, as a rule, millennial pastors have a much longer-term perspective on church tenure.

And they see their ministries fulfilled by lives changed and communities impacted. If the result is a larger church, they are fine with it. But numbers and size are not their measures of success, contentment or obedience.

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