



AMY HANSON

BABY  
**BOOMERS**  
and **BEYOND**

**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

Tapping the Ministry Talents  
and Passions of Adults over 50

[amyhanson.org](http://amyhanson.org)



**These discussion questions are designed to help you take what you've read in *Baby Boomers and Beyond* and apply it to your life and ministry context.**

There are a variety of ways in which you can use these questions:

1. Church staff members, elders and other church leaders could read one or two assigned chapters each week and then gather as a group to discuss the questions and begin applying the principles.
2. Older adult leaders who want to move their current ministry forward could have their lay-leaders read an assigned chapter and then gather together for discussion.
3. If you are reading this on your own, the discussion questions will help supplement your learning.
4. This discussion guide and book could also be used in a Sunday school class or small group to help mid-life and older adults learn how to make a Kingdom impact with their lives.

I would be thrilled to know how you've benefited from *Baby Boomers and Beyond* and what you've learned from your discussion. Please visit [amyhanson.org](http://amyhanson.org) to share your story and to find further resources. Thank You!

### Introduction

1. Take a good look at the demographics of your church, specifically the breakdown of adults who are 50 and above. Are you able to identify the three different groups of older adults I mention?
2. Draw three columns on a piece of paper and at the top of each column write down the three different groups of older adults. Under each group list as many needs and life issues that you can think of that are affecting each group. Below the life issues, write down any ideas you have for ministering with that particular group.
3. As you read through the book, refer back to the chart and add any additional needs, issues or ministry ideas that you discover.

### Chapter 1

1. As you consider the exploding growth of the older adult population, how are you affected? Are you motivated to action? Are you overwhelmed? Do you feel like it is just one more thing to do that you don't have time for?
2. Discuss some reasons why many churches are not giving a lot of focused attention to this age demographic.
3. Where have you seen ageism present in your church? In your community? In your own thinking?
4. On the last two pages of this chapter, I suggest three reasons why we cannot ignore the large number of adults entering their later years, which one stirs you the most and why?

### Chapter 2

1. Which of the six myths discussed in this chapter most surprised you? Which myth do you think most hinders the adults in your faith community and in your own personal context?
2. How have other aging stereotypes affected your view of ministry with older adults?
3. What can you do or are you currently doing in your ministry to create a new paradigm of aging? (See pgs. 29-33 to get your discussion started).
4. What is one new insight you gained from reading this chapter?

### Chapter 3

1. What fears do you have regarding your own aging? Be specific.
2. What fears about aging do you see manifested among the people you know and the people you serve?
3. Of the three pillars of successful aging discussed in this chapter, which pillar do you think you should address first among the people you know and serve. Why did you choose the one that you did? (As a reminder, the pillars are: physical health, mental health and engagement with life).
4. Take a look at these two quotes from p. 49:  
*“Leading-edge boomers will expend themselves on something. If we don’t engage them in productive and meaningful ministry, they will invest themselves elsewhere.”*

*“We have a small window of opportunity, right now, to influence how these older boomers use their time, abilities, and talents. It is imperative that we not waste the chance to call them into a life of meaningful work and service.”*

How do these quotes affect you? What can you begin to do to call boomers into a life of service?

### Chapter 4

1. Was there anything that surprised you in regards to the various relationships in which older adults are engaged? (You might want to review chapter four and make a list of the different relationships to assist in your discussion).
2. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: *“There are not many ministries within our churches that address the specific relationship issues effecting older adults.”*
3. What could your church begin doing to minister to adults who are caring for aging parents? To minister to adults who are raising their grandchildren? To minister to adults whose grown children are not walking with Christ?
4. What impacted you the most from this chapter?

**Chapter 5**

1. Consider this verse in light of society's view of retirement.  
*"The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" Luke 12:16-19*

How does this passage of Scripture challenge you? What do you need to readjust in terms of your own view of retirement? How might you begin to share this Biblical principle with others who are approaching or are already in retirement?

2. Review Robert Atchley's six phases of retirement on pgs. 91-94. Can you identify specific individuals in your community, your church and perhaps in your family who are in one of these phases? How could you minister to them during this particular phase?
3. Consider who you know to be good 'retirement mentors'? How might you begin to showcase them and tell their stories so they can serve as models for others?

### Chapter 6

1. What comes to your mind when you think of senior adult ministry? Be honest.
2. On pgs. 101-104, I suggest four different ways for defining age. Write down those four definitions for aging and then brainstorm various ministries that would be appropriate for each of the four age definitions. For example, a ministry geared towards social age would be a grandparenting conference.
3. The words 'senior' and 'senior adult ministry' are not going to be effective in reaching the new generation of older adults. What terms for identifying this new generation might work best in your ministry context? What ministry names might be appropriate?
4. At the end of chapter six I wrote, *"Sure, we can continue doing older adult ministry by planning a few trips and having a few luncheons-but a new cohort of older adults will not be reached, and the potential impact to be made for the Kingdom will be lost."*

Take some time to write down the differences between ministry with a new generation of older adults and the old senior adult ministry paradigm. It might help you to make two columns and compare and contrast the two groups.

5. What was your biggest take-away from this chapter?

## Chapter 7

1. Re-read the first paragraph on pg. 132. After you've read it, come up with some of your own reasons as to why telling the stories of older adults who are making an impact with their lives is essential.
  
2. Take some time to make story-telling a reality.
  - a. Begin by making a list with the names of older adults who are investing their lives in Kingdom work.
  
  - b. Next, make a list of the various ways you can begin to tell these stories. I suggest some on the top of pg. 132. Will these work in your ministry context? What other methods can you add to the list.
  
  - c. Set up a schedule and appoint people to interview the adults who are serving. Draw out their story.
  
  - d. Find a way for the stories to be heard.

*Remember, "To replace the old paradigm of aging with a new paradigm, we must show people what the new paradigm looks like through real examples" (p. 131).*

3. What one 'real-life story' from this chapter really resonated with you? Why did you choose the one you did?

### Chapter 8

1. Can you share the story of someone you know who was over the age of 50 and came to Christ? What about someone over the age of 70?
2. On pgs. 152-153, I suggest four ways of reaching out to older adults who are not yet Christ-followers. Which one of these four outreach suggestions are you most excited about? What would it take to put it into action? If you are already doing one or two of these suggestions, what results have you seen?
3. Write down the six spiritual pitfalls I mention in this chapter (beginning on p. 155). Discuss specific ways you can help people (and yourself) grow in each of these areas.
4. *"We need to ensure that our preaching and teaching addresses the spiritual topics and life issues affecting boomers."* (p. 163).

Evaluate how you (and your church) are doing in this area.

### Chapter 9

1. Can you identify areas in your church where older adults are withdrawing because they feel like they can't contribute as much as someone younger? What can you do to turn this around?
2. Reflect on your own life. Who are the older adults who have made a difference in your life and specifically in your Christian faith? What did they do? Describe what your relationship with them was like.
3. What is your biggest obstacle to making intergenerational ministry a reality?

### Conclusion

1. On p. 188, I share seven components of my dream for older adult ministry. What are your dreams regarding ministry with adults over 50?
2. Spend some time praying that your dreams and plans will align with God's. Reflect on Proverbs 19:21, Isaiah 46:10, Proverbs 21:30 and Jeremiah 10:23.
3. Consider the next steps you need to take to make the dreams become a reality.

# Amy Hanson

creating a new story for the new old



*"There is no one more qualified, more passionate, and more equipped to speak to the opportunities for unleashing an aging America to change the world."*

*Gene Appel, Senior Pastor, Eastside Christian Church, Fullerton, CA*

## Visit [amyhanson.org](http://amyhanson.org)

- ♦ Join on-going conversations about ministry with the new old
- ♦ Share stories of boomers making a significant Kingdom impact
- ♦ Invite Amy to speak at your church or consult with your leadership team

*"If you are serious about mobilizing the boomer generation for significant second half Kingdom work, I encourage you to get Amy on your team."*

*Rev. Chris Holck, Encore Director of the Evangelical Free Church of America*

[amyhanson.org](http://amyhanson.org)