What were you up to in your 20s? Where were you, and what decisions were you making? It's a question I've been asking myself recently as I've accepted this call to be an associate pastor here at FPCH. One of my primary responsibilities is to care for our young adults, so I've been thinking about the decisions I made during my 20s, and why they mattered.

During my 20s, I lived at home some, chose my degree, and finished college. In college, I even chose to grow out my hair and part it down the middle during the “grunge rock” era. From looking at photos….that was clearly a bad decision! I traveled to Mexico on mission trips, to Europe on a backpacking trip, and to the West on a “finding myself” trip. I became involved in ministry, met my wife Elisha, and was married at age 28. I left my hometown, and we followed the call to seminary, moving to California. Looking back, I put off some decisions in my 20s and also made many decisions that set my life on course; it was truly a “defining decade”.

In her TED talk* and book “The Defining Decade; why your twenties matter-and how to make the most of them now,” psychologist Meg Jay calls young adults to a new accountability for the decisions they make in their 20s. She’s witnessed too many young people spending years “living without perspective”. What’s worse she says, “are the tears shed by 30 and 40somethings because they are now paying a steep price-professionally, romantically, economically, reproductively for a lack of vision in their twenties.” NY Times writer Robin Marantz Henig agrees: “The 20s are like the stem cell of human development, the pluripotent moment when any of several outcomes is possible. Decisions and actions during this time have lasting ramifications.”

I have to confess these thoughts on young adults are completely refreshing, because what we often tell 20somethings, or believe in our 20s, is that we have time to put off life’s big decisions. We can keep our options open, whether it be work or love, and come back to these decisions in our 30s. But, as she points out, putting off decisions in our 20s is still making decisions; you may be setting yourself up to live through some of those decisions or change those decisions in your 30s/40s.

It is through prayer and reflection on issues like these, and thinking about the past 4-5 years of young adult ministry at FPCH, that our former young adult leadership team believed it was best to focus this new season of young adult ministry on college/20s. Although there are certainly issues that 30 year olds face that are similar to 20 year olds, it seemed best to not just lump everyone together. Young adulthood needs to stand on its own as a “defining decade”. It’s a critical time where young people need to be loved, encouraged, and challenged to fervently seek God’s vision and mission-and their place in it and not wait till their 30s to start tackling life’s decisions. I am thrilled to be part of this challenging call with you in helping our young adults make the most of their “defining decade.”
I recommend the TED talk “Why 30 is not the new 20”. Find it here: http://www.ted.com/talks/meg_jay_why_30_is_not_the_new_20.html

and

“The Defining Decade” book, if you know a 20something, are the parent of a 20something, and maybe, just maybe, still have a young adult living in your house. Stranger things have happened!

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