



## Next Generation

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I've been coming to People's for 18 years. My grandmother brought us here for the first time in 2000. We had New Members class with Deacon Bill Clardy. I remember walking into the sanctuary for the first time and seeing Dr. Baltimore – tall, friendly and inviting. Dr. Baltimore was VERY well-connected in Montgomery County. Everyone knew him – council members, state delegates, etc. I thought that I needed to be well-connected, too. So I went on to mirror that in my own career, not because I felt that it would get me things, but because I could help others as well as myself.

Dr. Baltimore always talked about (and so did Deacon Clardy) the picture hung on the wall just before the entrance into the sanctuary. He would reference the diagram and say, "We ought shed self, get off the seat, and let God sit there." I try to emulate this daily in my personal life and in my career. Just last week I was at a Leadership Montgomery event – and whom did I see? Deacon Lawrence Graham! Deacon Graham was giving his LM graduating class address. Dr. Robinson is also a Leadership Montgomery graduate, along with other church members. It is no secret that our church has a heart for community, leadership and "shedding self, getting off the seat, and letting God sit there."

We have Men's Rights of Passage, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc. What ever happened to the Deacon shadowing program? I would have loved to participate in something like that. I think Dr. Robinson, associate pastors and trustees are inclusive of young people, but we need to do more. We need to do more to encourage young people to come to church as they are and not in suits, dresses and the like – not compromising what it means to be presentable, but encouraging young and older people to just COME to church. Teach volunteerism and participation rather than emphasizing the consequences of not tithing. Many millennials owe a lot of student loan debt, which makes tithing difficult. Yes, the Bible says that we should tithe, but it also says that we can give from whatever is sown, and that includes our time and talents. I think pressure to tithe can push some people away from the church, regardless of age. If we encourage participation and involvement, tithing will naturally come.