

Mentoring for Jesus

Before Jesus ascended back to heaven, He left us clear instructions for us to disciple others. What does that mean?

From Matthew 28 it seems that 'discipling' includes reaching out to people with the Gospel, encouraging them to make a public commitment to follow the Lord, and teaching them how to live a life pleasing to Jesus by obeying His Word.

How can we fulfill this call? By coming alongside individuals as mentors; by teaching and modelling whole-hearted service for the Lord (Colossians 3:23,24); by showing our mentees how to be overcomers, so they can inherit all that God has for them (Revelation 21:7); and by praying for them (Colossians 1:9-12).

Some Christians are called to speak to crowds, and thankfully many souls come into the kingdom through their preaching. But I believe all of us are called to come alongside individuals, one at a time, many times over.

Everyone needs personal attention, whether they hear the Gospel in an evangelistic crusade or a church service, or in the testimony of a friend. They need someone to walk with them on their journey. They need a mentor. And ideally more than one. Over a lifetime, modelling and teaching from many mentors lends a richness and maturity to one's life.

SOUNDING THE TRUMPET

I believe God is calling us into action, to expand our borders and share our lives with others. To prayerfully watch for mentees to whom we can lend a listening ear. To make a point of getting to know them, listening for their questions, their confusion, their fears, their doubts, their hopes and their dreams.

The Lord gave us the written Word, and He Himself became the Living Word. His heart is to communicate His love and truth to people, His precious creation.

Jesus said, "As the Father has sent Me, so I send you" (John 20:21). We are saved to be sent, and sent to serve. The core of our mandate is to love God and love others. What more precious gift can we give than the love and truth of Christ?

So let's submit to the Father and depend on the Holy Spirit to speak the Living Word through us, to use our successes and failures, our gifts and our weaknesses – to use everything God has given us to bring Him pleasure and to bless others! Let's support each other in prayer and move ahead.

A NOTE TO 'SENIORS'

Some of us have been on the road of life for a while. We may think our serving days are over. In reality, maybe we need to 'switch gears' and become available to God in a new way – as mentors to the next generation!

Yes, we may feel inadequate. Yes, we may think we don't have much to offer, but the truth is that everything we have learned through painful and joyful experiences and from the Word of God can now benefit those who are coming up behind us on the journey of life. Younger people need us!

Let's be committed to passing on the love of the Lord, and the truth of the Word to the next generation.

"Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare Your power to the next generation, Your might to all who are to come" (Psalm 71:18).

"One generation will commend Your works to another; they will tell of Your mighty acts ... of the glorious splendour of Your majesty ... of the power of Your awesome works ... They will celebrate Your abundant goodness ..." (Psalm 145:4-7).

"And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things" (2 Peter 1:15).

MY MENTORING SESSIONS

Although I don't follow a 'system', it might be helpful to look at some of the elements my sessions often include.

Before I meet with a mentee I pray that God will prepare both of us for a fruitful session. At times I will ask the mentee to come prepared, either by completing an assignment, or by bringing a topic to discuss.

After asking a simple opening question, such as "How are you doing?" I listen and I observe. In fact, I spend most of our time together listening. I confirm that I've understood what they've expressed, and I look for something positive to affirm. I'll ask relevant questions to bring further clarity. I silently pray for wisdom and then I share what comes to mind, if it seems appropriate, such as relevant Scriptures, my thoughts and personal experience. Sometimes my words are comforting, sometimes challenging (1 Thessalonians 2:11,12; 5:14), always ending on a positive note. When it's possible, and if the mentee agrees, we pray together. We might end the session with a plan of next steps for the mentee to take or an exercise to do. Before parting we might agree on how soon we would like to have contact again.

After each session I sometimes jot down some thoughts. This helps in order to prepare for the next meeting, and to pray for the mentee in between sessions.

YOUR STYLE, YOUR PERSPECTIVE

As you mentor, you will develop your own style. Even then, each session will vary somewhat, depending on who your mentee is, their current circumstances and concerns, and the mentoring environment. You will draw on your own experience, and share from life lessons you've learned along your journey. To start with, you can use the sample life lessons and mentoring models below if you find any of them helpful. If not, just create your own! You can trust that God will guide you as you make yourself available as a Legacy Mentor.

SAMPLE LIFE LESSONS

Signs of Maturity include:

- living by conscious priorities and choices rather than by sheer emotion or the 'tyranny' of circumstances
- taking responsibility for one's own actions and reactions, rather than blaming or complaining
- delaying personal gratification for love's sake

Spiritual Success can be defined as:

- a heart, soul, mind and body surrendered to the Lord Jesus
- a heart filled with understanding and love for God and people
- a fruitful life in both character and deed – loving Jesus and doing good

STEPPING UP AND STANDING BACK

I have found that we can best help others by remembering that God alone is God. We are not. We can listen and give input, but we cannot 'fix' or control someone else's life, nor should we even try.

SHARING YOUR STORY AND INSIGHTS

What's Helpful

- supporting your mentee in ways that are relevant and strengthening
- sharing brief comments about yourself to:
 - help your mentee feel comfortable with you
 - show your understanding based on your own experience
 - pass on an important life lesson learned
 - portray something of the character of God

What Isn't

- always bringing the conversation back to you; the mentoring relationship is about your mentee – listening to them, encouraging them, guiding them
- making decisions for your mentee, taking on responsibilities that belong to them, or in any other way trying to control their life
- fostering dependence on you as their sole support – they need input from a variety of people

You'll Know

I encourage you to check in with the Lord, and see what He has in mind for you. I have a sense that there might be someone waiting just for you!

If you are already 'full up' with serving, thank you! The kingdom is a better place because of you!

'Pray & Mentor' Model of Mentoring

- P Pray that God will prepare you and bring to you someone who needs you.
- R Remember – the Holy Spirit will enable you, and the Word of God will equip you.
- A Be available to come alongside.
- Y Yes, you can be a channel of God's blessing, by His amazing grace!
- &
- M Maintain an intimate, honest, open, humble relationship with the Lord, as you continue to learn and grow.
- E Encourage repentance, fruitfulness, and maturity in your mentee.
- N Nurture in your mentee a sense of being loved and significant as God's unique creation; help them identify and develop their own unique contribution to the kingdom of God and to society.
- T Train your mentee as needed, using tools such as this Handbook for teaching life skills and discipleship.
- O Open your heart to let your mentee in, and to let your mentee go when it is time for you and for them to move on.
- R Refer your mentee to other resources for further personal growth.

'S E N T' Model of Mentoring

- S **Seek:** "To try to locate or discover; to search for. To endeavour to obtain or reach. To move to; to go to or toward. To inquire for, to request."
- E **Encourage:** "To inspire to continue on a chosen course; to impart courage or confidence to; to embolden; hearten. To give support to; foster."
- N **Nurture:** "The act of promoting development or growth; upbringing; rearing. To nourish. To educate or train."
- T **Train:** "To coach in or accustom to some mode of behaviour or performance ... To focus or direct; to aim ... To teach – to impart knowledge or skill to; give instruction to ... To cause to learn by example or experience."

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1973. New York, NY: American Heritage Publishing Co. Inc.