

Chapter Five: Mentoring

Back in the days when sons worked with their fathers to provide life's necessities, role modeling was a natural part of life. In earlier days, apprenticeships were also a form of a mentoring relationship. Young people had the opportunity to learn a trade or craft by observing and developing skills under a master craftsman's direction. Meanwhile, daughters learned the skills necessary for family care while they worked with their mothers to prepare food and perform other household duties. Extended family members also insured that many other skills were passed to the next generation.

Mentoring experienced a surge of interest during the 1990's. Perhaps this was a result of people realizing they were separated from their biological families. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins were not available to fill the roles of mentor, teacher, encourager, discipler, and coach.

Today a variety of words describe relationships that resemble role models and mentoring. These include mentor, teacher, encourager, discipler, and coach. While nuances may distinguish the relationships, the ultimate goal is consistent: one person helping another grow.

Women's Ministries is an excellent place for role modeling and mentor relationships to develop. Role modeling often happens naturally as women watch other women and incorporate the positive traits they see into their own lives. Mentoring relationships, on the other hand, are deeper. They require a greater level of personal commitment. Mentoring is today's application of Paul's instructions in Titus 2:3-5: *Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.*

While the life circumstances of those who first heard Paul's words are different from today, we can still glean from the principles he taught. Women who are more mature have a responsibility to teach those who are less mature. For example, a woman whose children are grown can mentor a new mother as she learns to juggle various roles. Yet a young widow can companion an older woman through the grief process following her husband's death. Life experiences and maturity become a determining factor in mentoring relationships.

What is Role Modeling?

Role models are often women whose behaviors and skills are observed from a distance or learned about through reading. These

individuals may or may not be aware that they are serving as a role model. Role models may or may not have a personal relationship with the women who see them as examples. Role models provide examples for women to follow during times of specific need, in a profession, or through new experiences.

Many children grow up without extended families close by, so they tend to look outside the home for role models. Some young mothers and fathers look for individuals to fill a grandparent's role for their children. New mothers look to women further into the child-rearing years to provide encouragement and to serve as role models. Young parents who grew up in single-parent homes look for someone to be the role model of the non-residential parent. Newly married couples look for couples to see how marriage works. New Christians look for mature Christians to help them navigate the new lifestyle called Christianity.

As mentioned before, role modeling can occur without a personal relationship. Many people find wisdom and value reading books or articles about people who are role models in society or in the Christian world. Some people tell how reading books written by the saints of yesteryear have motivated them to develop their Christian faith. Knowing that others through time have struggled with integrating Christianity into all aspects of life has encouraged them. For example, *In His Steps* and *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* are just two of many books written years ago that continue to influence Christians today.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring was a basic element of life before the 1900's. It occurred naturally as boys and girls learned farming, gardening, and life survival skills while working with their parents. Mentoring was the chief learning method as artisans invested time and taught skills to apprentices. At one time, the university system revolved around a student learning in the scholars' homes. Mentoring occurred in royal courts as knights taught warriors' skills to the novices. In the eighteenth century, people like Jonathan and Sarah Edwards frequently had one or more "disciples" living in their homes to observe marriage and personal spiritual dynamics.

When we research mentoring, we see the definition of mentoring varies with each author; however, some commonalities tie the definitions together. In *Connecting*, Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton define mentoring as "a relational experience in which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources." In *Mentoring*, Bobb Biehl adds time references to his definition: "Mentoring is a lifelong relationship, in which a mentor helps a protégé reach her or his God-given potential."

Mentors share lessons they have learned, extend helping hands, and become safety lines of love and affirmation to those following them. *The Word in Life Study Bible* stresses the giving

aspect of mentoring by describing it as a “voluntary investment in others for their growth, development, and success.” This definition is expanded to include faith in the value of the mentee and the benefits for this individual. Because of the value of the learner, mentoring may require loving sacrifice from the mentor. Howard Hendricks from Dallas Theological Seminary describes mentors as individuals involved in a process. Mentors are committed to help people grow, to keep them growing, and to assist them as they realize their life goals.

Looking at the lives of biblical personalities and Christian leaders, we find references to, and experiences of, mentoring relationships. Moses prepared Joshua for the transition of leadership as the Israelites entered Canaan. Eli helped Samuel develop into a man who listened to God's voice and spoke to the nation. Priscilla and Aquilla disciplined Apollos, taught him essentials for the faith, and sponsored his ministry. Barnabas stood behind Paul, the persecutor-turned-convert, as he introduced him to church leaders and testified of his conversion. Assisted by Barnabas' mentoring, Paul became the outstanding leader of the New Testament church. Paul recruited Timothy and passed along the importance of mentoring by building on the foundation Timothy's mother and grandmother had laid in the young man's life.

Need for Mentors

In *Counseling Single Adults* Doug Fagerstrom suggests people need five different types of relationships in their lives: parent figure; role model; casual friend; intimate friend; and spiritual director, who is someone who comes alongside and helps you reach your spiritual goals. As people mature, the function of these relationships may change. The mentor who fills one of these relationships during a woman's childhood may not continue to fill that role when she reaches adolescence or adulthood.

Dr. Howard Hendricks suggests that each woman needs three types of mentoring relationships in her life: an older woman role model, a contemporary “soul sister,” and a younger woman to teach. Through the older woman's life, a woman sees that survival is possible, and she sees a demonstration of spiritual maturity and depth to emulate. A contemporary in a woman's life is someone who she loves and trusts. In this relationship, she finds acceptance and someone who can help her identify areas of her life that need attention.

To fulfill the third mentoring relationship, each woman also needs a younger woman to mentor. This relationship involves sharing experiences, passing along traditions, and helping the younger woman apply Christianity in the current society. It may also include teaching and being a role model for the younger woman as she finds her place in adulthood. This may be the more challenging relationship to develop since older women are often

reluctant to approach younger women. Remember that many young women are separated from their biological families and would like to have a mentor.

As technology increases, a growing number of women find themselves isolated. Equipment and technological advances make it possible for us to work at home. E-mail, cell phones, and fax machines offer quick communication but lack personal contact. Increasing numbers of women spend time communicating with others they may never meet. The need for mentors increases as this sense of isolation continues to grow.

Changes in the family structure often leave some people without an effective model for fathering or mothering. Those reared by a single parent frequently face unique fears as they enter marriage. While these women may ask the same questions entering marriage as those who were raised in a two parent home, they are more likely to wonder if they will repeat the pattern of becoming a single parent or break the cycle. Adults who were raised by abusive or emotionally absent parents also look for others to teach and model effective parenting.

Characteristics of a Mentor

Some common characteristics are found in most mentoring relationships. These include:

- Ability to see the potential in women.
- Tolerance to see the potential beyond mistakes and difficult personality traits.
- Flexibility in responding to the woman and situations.
- Patience and perseverance as gifts, talents, and abilities develop.
- Perspective and the ability to see down the road as the basis for the next step.
- The gifts and abilities to encourage others.

Mentors also give timely advice, offer encouragement, and provide helpful information from articles, books, and other sources. Mentors are willing to risk their reputations as they give the mentored person opportunities to develop leadership skills. Mentors encourage mentees to reach beyond their accomplishments to accept the challenges of a new generation. Mentors invite their disciples to come alongside them and learn while doing. Eventually, the roles reverse as the mentored ones accept new roles — the mentors then step into helping roles.

Ideal mentors structure the mentoring relationship, conversations, and activities to help protégés reach their God-given potential. These mentors remember the relationship is a two-way street. While mentors teach skills and model behaviors, they are also willing to learn from the mentee.

Beginning a Mentoring Relationship

A mentoring relationship may be initiated by either the one who wants to mentor or the one who wants to be mentored. Women must always be mentored by other women, and men by other men. At the beginning of this relationship, both women must take time to determine what they are willing to commit to and invest in the relationship.

A woman who has identified a woman she would like to have as a mentor may ask her about her interest in establishing a mentoring relationship. Likewise, women who feel they have something to offer less experienced women may approach them about the possibility of investing in the future.

What kind of questions should you cover as you evaluate starting a mentoring relationship?

- How easily do we communicate?
- How well do we relate to each other?
- What areas will the mentoring relationship involve?
- What are the expectations of the mentor and mentee?
- How frequently and for how long will we meet?
- Are our philosophies of life compatible?
- Are we both Christians? If not, how will this affect the relationship?

While professional mentoring relationships may not demand that both women be Christians, we need to exercise caution about entering such relationships. Even with the focus on professional or work-related mentoring, Christianity is a lifestyle that permeates all aspects of life. Therefore, relationships involving a non-Christian and Christian may be less effective because of different life perspectives.

Wait until you feel it is God's time to begin a mentoring relationship. Forced relationships or those resulting from pressure may not have the commitment necessary to foster true mentoring.

Identifying a Mentor or Mentee

I will never forget the first day of my teaching career. The teachers eagerly surrounded the desk of the principal's secretary for the first glimpse of their class lists. The other second grade teachers quickly formed a group as they scanned their list looking for "the name." With a sigh of relief, they looked from one to another attempting to pinpoint the unfortunate person. A first grade teacher looked over my list and marked one name. I realized "the name" was on my list.

Before long, I understood the others' apprehension about this student. I also remember how willing other first and second grade teachers were to help me during that school year. They listened to my frustrations, offered advice, and made suggestions for coping with that student.

While it was not part of a formal relationship, I reflect fondly on that mentoring I received from those teachers. Sometimes I asked for advice and at other times mentoring just happened during recess, over lunch, and at various meetings. Those relationships laid a foundation for me to build on during my teaching career.

Consider the women you know who are ten or more years younger than you are. Name three women in whom you see potential, ones you would like to get to know better and share some common interests. These interests may be work or career related, similar experiences, or other shared interests. These commonalities open the door for a mentoring relationship.

As you contemplate beginning a mentoring relationship, consider these questions.

For the Mentor

1. Do I suggest a mentoring relationship or do I wait to be asked? While a mentoring relationship may begin either way, one woman must take the initiative. Who asks is not the important issue — establishing the relationship is. Due to the commitment of attention, interest, and encouragement, often the mentor first approaches the woman she wishes to mentor.

2. What time commitment does a mentoring relationship involve? Each relationship is unique. Common interests, needs, and proximity are usually determining factors as you analyze the time commitment. If you live near each other, you may meet weekly or monthly. Some mentoring relationships are long distance with infrequent personal visits. These women maintain contact by phone, fax, e-mail, and letters. Other relationships are based on an as-needed frequency. At first, you may need to invest extra time in the relationship to become better acquainted and relaxed with each other. Relationship-building times can include walks, come-with-me invitations as you perform various duties and responsibilities, or spontaneous encounters that forge your relationship.

3. What topics will you discuss during meeting times? The meeting agenda is set by the mentee's needs. Discussions may include focus on decisions the mentee needs to make, problems for which the mentor can offer insights, listening as the mentee reaches a conclusion, updating of concerns from previous meetings, reporting of progress and prayer requests.

4. Where do these meetings occur? Anywhere you can enjoy personal, in-depth talk. Meetings may occur in restaurants over a meal or something to drink. At times, depending on the topics to cover, you may want a more private location — a walk in a park, your home, or your office. Remember much of mentoring is sharing your life with the woman you are mentoring. Mentoring is an attitude more than a setting.

5. How much advice do I offer? Sometimes advice is sought and accepted. Other times, the mentee simply needs an opportunity to talk and gain another perspective to a situation. When you give advice, remember the mentee decides what to do with it. The goal is not to make a clone of yourself but to assist the mentee in developing God-given potential and abilities.

6. How will I know when to end the relationship? Ending or changing any relationship is difficult. A relationship may naturally die due to changing interests and needs or from a conflict. Whatever causes the change, make certain that you maintain open communication so both of you feel positive. Make sure you convey care, honesty, and fairness. Be positive and use "I" statements. End the discussion by assuring the mentee of your continued interest and support. Leave the door open for the future, too.

7. Should I loan money to my mentee? Though you might be tempted, loaning money can hurt a mentoring relationship, even if you take precautions of signing formal papers.

8. What is the confidentiality level? Extremely high. Never discuss with others information you shared or gained through a mentoring relationship.

Desirable Characteristics in a Mentee

1. The individual is a woman of integrity. As you look at this woman, you see potential and someone in whom you want to invest time and energy.

2. The individual is enjoyable. You want to see this woman succeed. This is someone you are willing to invest in for a lifetime. She is a woman with whom you can be comfortable.

3. The individual is open to being nurtured and is an eager disciple. Look for a woman who wants to learn from the experiences of others. A teachable attitude is a basic requirement for a mentoring relationship.

4. The individual is self-motivated. As the relationship progresses, the woman should take some responsibility for setting up meeting times and contacting you.

Your Mentor and You

As you consider a mentoring relationship, look for a woman who is more experienced than you, believes in you, indicates an interest in your well-being, enjoys being with you, and encourages you. The following characteristics are important as you identify potential mentors.

1. A mentor is honest with you. Honesty does not mean being critical; it reflects a willingness to help you face tough issues. Because the mentor is interested in your well-being, she is willing to address uncomfortable issues. The ideal mentor is honest, caring, and fair.

2. A mentor is a model for you. Remember the goal is develop-

ing your full potential — not to become a clone of your mentor. Your mentor, however, should be a woman who lives with integrity.

3. A mentor is deeply committed to you. The Scriptures contain examples of mentoring: Jesus and the disciples, Priscilla and Aquila, Paul and Timothy, Saul and Annaïas. These examples show how individuals walked with others as they faced new experiences.

4. A mentor is open and approachable. A mentor shares success stories as well as stories about situations that didn't turn out so successfully. It is important for you to see both sides and to learn that life goes on.

5. A mentor is a good teacher. A mentor explains the "how" and "why" behind tasks and decisions and gives you opportunities to learn new skills.

6. A mentor believes in your potential. A mentor is your cheerleader. As you talk to your mentor about discouraging times, she will encourage you to keep going, even when you may want to quit.

7. A mentor helps define your dreams and develop plans to achieve them. This involves clarifying your dreams and determining how realistic they are. Part of the mentor process is refining dreams into achievable goals.

8. A mentor is successful in your eyes; a woman you want to be like. This does not necessarily mean successful by the world's standards. Success should be defined as following God's leading.

9. A mentor is willing to learn from you. A mentor models teachability while teaching. An ideal mentoring relationship is a two-way street with both of you giving to and receiving from each other.

10. A mentor is willing to follow your agenda. You determine the topics you will discuss during your times together.

As your mentoring relationship develops, be gracious and thank your mentor. While your mentor does not expect any kind of compensation, sincere appreciation is always acceptable. Share how you have benefited from your time together. Be considerate of your mentor's availability and work together to determine meeting times and places. Express the admiration and love you feel for your mentor. Although watching you grow and develop is rewarding, your mentor will enjoy hearing you express those words.

Implications of Mentoring for Women's Ministries

Mentoring is not another program or ministry under the umbrella of Women's Ministries. Most successful mentoring relationships occur when women see other women they'd like to be mentored by or to mentor.

The role of Women's Ministries is educational. We provide information and create opportunities for women in all strata of life to become acquainted. As women develop relationships and

friendships, mentoring opportunities naturally evolve. New Christians become acquainted with mature Christians who provide encouragement as they live the Christian lifestyle. Life-long Church of the Nazarene members are able to share our denominational history with new Nazarenes. Additionally, the Women's Ministries Director may demonstrate mentoring as she works with future leaders to develop their skills and as she gives them opportunities to use these skills.

Consider women in your congregation. Who has the potential to be a future Women's Ministries Director? Who are the new Christian women who could benefit from another woman discussing the implications of Christianity on their lives? Who are the new Nazarenes that need to understand the Wesleyan/holiness perspective and the influence of the Church of the Nazarene world-wide?

Begin applying this information with Women's Ministries Council members. Role-modeling has many merits; however, you'll have a deeper and longer-lasting effect through mentoring. Identify one council member who has leadership potential. Become better acquainted and gradually implement leadership information as you become her mentor.

Summary

Mentoring is deliberately selecting another woman in whom you are willing to invest yourself to help her achieve her life goals. It requires a long-term commitment of time, energy, and availability. Mentoring draws from life experiences and requires a dedication to the agenda of the mentee.

Because many women are relationship orientated, Women's Ministries is the ideal setting to teach mentoring. As you mentor council members, develop strategies for educating other women about mentoring; and, ultimately, inform the entire congregation. One of the hallmarks of young adults is their need for relationships. Mentoring may be the key to reaching them.

Differences Among Evangelism, Discipleship, Mentoring

Mentoring is one of many terms used interchangeably. While there may be elements of the various roles involved in mentoring, Biehl makes distinctions among these roles. The following charts state these differences.

<u>EVANGELISM</u>	<u>DISCIPLESHIP</u>	<u>MENTORING</u>
Is it scriptural? Taught and modeled in scripture.	Taught and modeled in scripture.	Modeled in scripture.
Models in scripture Paul.	Timothy.	Barnabas.
How great is the need? Desperate.	Desperate.	Desperate.
Primary basis of interchange Content.	Content.	Relationship.
Type of role Convincing non-believers and defending the faith. Presenting the Good News.	Teaching new believers spiritual truths in all aspects of life.	Caring for and helping a person.
Whose agenda? Evangelist's agenda (the gospel).	Discipler's agenda (spiritual disciples).	Protégé's agenda (goals/problems)
Training required? Person equipped as evangelist.	Academic knowledge and personal mastery of the spiritual disciplines.	Pastoral life experience relevant to protégé.
Time frame Less than one hour (typically).	Limited time course of study.	Life-long as needed.
Long-term commitment required Low.	Low.	High.

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EVANGELISM

Focus on time together

Presenting the salvation opportunity.

DISCIPLESHIP

Teaching the spiritual disciplines.

MENTORING

Supporting toward maturity in all areas of life.

Importance of personal chemistry

Respect required.

Respect required.

Respect and personal chemistry required.

Approximate involved

Possibly thousands evangelized over a lifetime.

Possibly hundreds disciplined over a lifetime.

Typically one to twelve mentored over a lifetime.

Modern role parallels

Brilliant, articulate, evangelist/apologist.

Disciplined mature teacher.

Loving aunt, uncle or close (more experienced) friend.

Essential message

Repent, you must be saved! The kingdom is at hand.

To mature spiritually, here is what you need to know, do or become.

How can I help you get where you are going?