

MENTORING

For our EU/EGF fellowship, Personal Evangelism, Cell group concept and Personal concerns are the hallmarks. We don't want to be programme-oriented, rather we wish to be people-oriented.

Can we say that mentoring is still very much part of our ministry or is it missing now? Am I a mentor to somebody? Or the art of mentoring is not part of my ministry?

The dictionary meaning of the word "Mentor" is " a trusted advisor of somebody with limited experience in a particular field" or " a wise counsellor". In fact, mentoring is expected of every Christian. In our own lives we can think of the influence of many people. And some of them are our mentors. (Parents, pastors, friends, relatives etc.) We need to thank God for them. Let us remember them and imitate their faith as we read in Hebrews 13:7. Both in the Bible and in the history we have many examples for mentoring.

Let us study this topic under three heading:

1. Biblical patterns of mentoring.
2. Seven gifts a mentor gives
3. Some practical steps.

1. Biblical Patterns of Mentoring:

We see the models from the Scriptures. Moses mentored Joshua; Elijah mentored Elisah; Jesus mentored the twelve apostles (focussing on three in particular). Barnabas mentored Paul and John Mark. Paul mentored Timothy and Titus. We can learn some precious lessons from these models:

- i. Like Jesus, the Master Mentor, we need to see the potential in other person and should be able to see what that person could become.
- ii. Like Jesus, we need to be available to them, be patient with them and be a role model to them. (John 1: 38-41)
- iii. Like Moses to Joshua, we need to help others to reach their potential. (Ex. 33:11; Deut: 34:9)
- iv. Like Barnabas, we need to encourage our trainees (Acts. 9:27; 11:23, 24)
- v. Like Barnabas, we need to help even a backslider like John Mark. (Acts 15: 36, 39)
- vi. Like Paul, be a spiritual father and continue to encourage the trainees in their respective assignments. (I Tim. 1:1,2; Titus 1: 1-4)
- vii. Like Aquilla & Priscilla, we need to open our homes for trainees. (Acts 18: 27,28)

We can influence many people in our day to day life. But, we need to take a special effort to be a mentor for one or two.

2. Seven gifts a mentor gives:

Tim Elmore, in his book “The greatest Mentors in the Bible” describes seven gifts a mentor could give. They are:

1. **Affirmation** - speak words of encouragement, acceptance and support - affirming their strengths and their positive choices. Great mentors affirm their mentee regularly.
2. **Assessment** - objectively evaluate their present state and give them an assessment of what you see. It enables them to gain perspective from an outside view point.
3. **Accountability** - hold your mentee to their commitments. This may involve asking tough questions that relate to commitments they have made.
4. **Advise** - speak words of wise counsel, and help them think through options for their decisions. Though advice is important, sometimes all a person needs in the gift of a listening ear or a word of acceptance.
5. **Admonition** - speak words of caution and warning. At times they may need correction to keep them on the right path.
6. **Assets** - give or loan tangible help in the form of books, tapes, ministry tools and other resources, personal contacts, gifts and bright ideas.
7. **Application** - help them find a place where they can practice what they are learning. Good mentors suggest places where truth can be applied.

As Christians, the investments we make in the lives of others are the most significant accomplishments we’ll leave behind on this earth.

3. Some Practical Tips:

1. We are not experts in everything. So, decide what you have learnt and which you wish to pass on to others.
 2. Pray and ask God for people in whom you can invest. We see that Jesus spent a whole night in prayer to the Father, the day before He chose the twelve as His disciples. We need to take this as God given responsibility.
 3. Invest in their lives. Not just casually helping, rather involved in their lives and be a blessing to them.
 4. Love and discipline should go together in mentoring. In Eph. 5:14, we read, “speak the truth in love”. The followers will eventually be thankful that the mentor has had the guts to talk about difficult things with them instead of untruthfully patting them on the back. Some mentors hate to be in a situation of confrontation.
 5. Care and risks in mentoring. Mentors must care for the followers in all possible ways. This does not mean to protect them when they are clearly wrong. In the name of care the mentors must make sure that there are enough challenges for the followers to grow. Be ready for disappointment from the followers! It is possible they fail, though you have given all your help.
 6. Don’t be possessive: Though you are the mentor, your follower may get the help of others in their lives. Allow this to happen, without any ill feeling.
 7. Let mentoring be a joyful experience to us. As someone has said, it should be like a hobby. Mentoring becomes an enjoyable hobby when the mentor helps people to the fullest potential without burning himself out.
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