

MENTORING/DISCIPLING DEFINITION AND UNDERSTANDING ¹

Introduction to Discipling / Mentoring

One of the primary purposes of the church is to "make disciples" (Matt. 28:19-20). While this is done in many ways, one important way is through one-on-one discipling relationships. These intentional relationships are a means God uses to develop us to be more like Christ. Mentoring, or one-on-one discipleship, describes the unique relationship in which a believer purposefully walks alongside of another believer in such a way as to assist, encourage and stimulate them to grow to be more like Christ. The discipler is not the focus, Christ is, and both individuals should grow as they submit to and obey God and His truth. Individual discipleship is one way God can transform us to be more like Christ.

Scripture values cross-generational discipling relationships for encouragement, teaching and godliness. Believers are equal in Christ, and variously gifted. Maturity happens through deepening relationships one to another as they are centered around the Lord and His Word (Hebrews 10:23-25; Romans 12:9-10; 1 Corinthians 13; 2 Timothy 1:5-6).

Christ's final commission in Matthew 28:19-20 reveals three primary means or ways in which we make disciples. We are to assist disciples as they grow to identify with Christ, learn His ways and walk in them, and then make other disciples.

1. **Disciples identify themselves with Christ.** "...baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..."
2. **Disciples obey Christ's commands.** "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you..."
3. **Disciples work together to make other disciples.** "Go therefore and make disciples..."

The Role of the Mentor

What does a mentor/discipler do? The role of the mentor is to provide support, encouragement, and accountability to an individual. While the classroom focuses on instruction of God's truth, the mentor is focused on support and coming alongside to implement the truth they are learning that the whole person might be developed and matured. This should be done in a relational way, that is unique to you and your mentee/disciple. It is an ideal place to work on character development, submission to the Lord, spiritual disciplines, support, encouragement and understanding of who God has made them to be and how they should live.

Mentors should endeavor to meet the following (minimums).

- Pray for your mentee daily
- Meet monthly (minimum). Twice a month would be ideal.
- Get to know them personally
- Work to understand their unique joys and challenges of life
- Ask significant/meaningful questions
- Listen attentively towards cultivating transformation and growth in Christ
- Point them to the Lord and His Word in all areas
- Implement the characteristics of effective mentoring (below)
- Love the whole person — they are not a project!
- File timely and meaningful mentor reports

¹ The terms mentor/mentoring and disciple/discipling are being used interchangeably in this document. For more about one on one discipling see *Philosophy of Ministry: One-on-One Discipleship*.

Who can mentor? The qualifications of a Mentor

We desire mentors that are mature men and women of God, who are in substantial agreement with the doctrinal beliefs of Grace Baptist, who live spirit-submitted lives, and are involved in serving/attending services at Grace Baptist Church.

Assumptions about Mentoring

- The mentoring relationship can be used by the Lord to grow both mentor and mentee.
- Mentoring will be successful when both participants are consistently yielded to the Spirit.
- Mentoring is not a meeting, it is a process of engagement.
- Mentoring is designed for the holistic development of an individual.

Characteristics of Effective Mentoring

The purpose of a mentoring relationship is to create a context in which God can bring about healthy transformation and growth in an individual's life as we become like Christ.

1. **Relational** — Effective mentoring is highly relational. While content is always involved in mentoring, an open and authentic relationship allows the mentee to see how truth has impacted the mentors life in a way that can be transferable to them.
2. **Reflection** — Meaningful reflection allows us to move truth that is known and understood into the fabric of our lives. Mentors can use thoughtful questions and personal reflection to assist in this.
3. **Varied input** — God has chosen to provide believers with a variety of inputs by which we grow. The meaningful input of a mentor allows the mentee to understand, exam, confirm, and make decisions about important Christian truths in their lives.
4. **Intentionality** — The mentoring process allows us a focused time to discover and deal with root issues in life, rather than just focus on symptoms alone. Helping a mentee see areas of growth and clarify what steps are required to grow helps prepare them for today's challenges as well as the challenges of the future.
5. **Integration** — Leadership and ministry preparation requires the development of the whole person. Effective mentoring seeks to stimulate growth in mind, heart, soul, desires, values and so forth. It is not merely directed at the head, but seeks to integrate head, heart and hand.

Common Barriers ²

Barrier 1: Time. "I don't have the time."

This can often be overcome by reprioritizing life.

Barrier 2: Ignorance. "I don't know what to do"

This is a common objection. Many have not been discipled by someone, so they don't have a model or material to use in discipling others.

Barrier 3: Maturity. "I'm not mature enough"

Every believer who is consistently walking with the Spirit is able to disciple another believer.

Barrier 4: Who? "I don't know who to disciple"

Who can you begin or develop an intentional relationship with that you might encourage and challenge them to be more like Christ? Pick someone and engage with them.

² For a complete discussion of these barriers and solutions see *Philosophy of Ministry: One-on-One Discipleship*.