

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING.

THE RED DOOR COMMUNITY CHURCH



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THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESOURCE PURPOSE.



The purpose of this document is to help establish a foundation and framework for mentoring in order to encourage and equip mentoring relationships within our church community.

Each person who mentors is unique, each person being mentored is unique and each situation and circumstance that the mentee is seeking wisdom and guidance for is unique. Therefore, how a mentoring relationship is structured and outworked needs to accommodate this reality. For this reason what follows isn't a step-by-step instruction manual but rather foundational principles and guidance.

Much of what follows has been sourced from a book entitled Instruments in the Redeemers Hands by Paul Tripp. We would encourage anyone in a mentoring relationship to read this book as it is a valuable source of wisdom for the vital ministry of mentoring.

Also, it is important to note that this guide specifically frames mentoring within the context of the church and the Christian community. This isn't a guide for general mentoring relationships but for discipleship mentoring relationships where the ultimate goal in mind is always deeper formation into Christlikeness for both the mentee and the mentor.





WHO IT IS FOR AND HOW IT CAN BE USED

WHO & HOW?



For those who are considering being a mentor...

In passages such as those found in Titus 2 there is a biblical expectation of the older and wiser engaging in mentoring relationships with those who are younger and less experienced in different aspects of life. Sometimes though just being older and more experienced doesn't necessarily help us to be equipped to be a good mentor or to feel confident in a mentoring relationship.

If you are thinking you'd like to mentor someone or perhaps if you've been asked by someone to be their mentor and you're not sure if you should or where to start then this resource is a helpful beginning point. We would encourage you to prayerfully and reflectively read through this guide and then perhaps arrange to meet with someone from the Pastoral Team to go through any questions or concerns.

For those already in a mentoring relationship...

Even if you are already a mentor or a mentee, we would encourage you to read through this guide. It is likely there will be ideas and wisdom here that will help deepen your current mentoring relationship. This resource will help equip those who are mentors to be faithful and effective in the giving and sharing of guidance and wisdom. And, this resource will also help equip those who are mentees to be faithful and effective in the seeking and receiving of guidance and wisdom.

For those who are beginning a mentoring relationship...

You may have recently agreed to enter into a mentoring relationship but you're not sure where to begin. This guide will be a helpful tool in establishing a fruitful and enjoyable mentoring relationship.

For those who are looking for a mentor...

This guide will help provide guidance in the journey of considering who might be a helpful person to mentor you. Specific focus on the sections "Who Can Mentor?" and "How to Find a Mentor?" will be helpful.



DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING THE FOUNDATIONS

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What Is Discipleship Mentoring?

Mentoring relationships come in many shapes and forms. Ultimately, they are relationships built on the desire to walk together towards Christlikeness as we navigate the situations and challenges of everyday life. As they share time with one another, the mentor sows wisdom, love, encouragement and correction into the life of the mentee.

Someone may seek out a mentor for help with their marriage, for help with their devotional life, for help with parenting or just to help navigate their current season of life. Someone may also seek out a mentor to help equip and guide them in a specific area of calling or vocation.

What's important to note is that mentoring within our church context always ultimately has discipleship in mind. Whether it be marriage or parenting or vocation, we are always working to see one another grow in maturity and grow in our capacity to be faithful to Jesus in all aspects and seasons of life.

Here is a definition of discipleship mentoring:

Mentoring involves the care, comfort, and counsel to a person (the mentee) who desires to be equipped, encouraged, and matured in a specific aspect of their life with faithfulness to the person and the way of Jesus as both the foundation and overall goal.

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What are the differences from other types of discipleship relationships?

In the context of church, mentoring, pastoral care, and counselling are all forms of support and guidance, but they differ in their approaches, purposes, and the roles of those involved. While there can be elements of crossover, it is important to distinguish the difference between mentoring and other discipleship and care relationships within the church.

Key Differences:

- Mentoring tends to be focused on longer-term personal and spiritual growth through an ongoing relationship.
- Pastoral care is the provision of spiritual and emotional support by pastors or other designated church leaders to members of the congregation where the primary aim is to ensure the well-being of church members, addressing their spiritual, emotional, and sometimes physical needs.
- Counselling is a structured, often therapeutic process aimed at resolving specific psychological or relational issues with a trained professional.

Each of these roles plays a vital part in the holistic support and development of church members, addressing different aspects of their needs and growth. As a mentor it is important to know where your limits of responsibility lie. There may well be moments in a mentoring relationship where you need to acknowledge that you don't have the capacity, experience, or resources to provide what your mentee needs, and they need to be encouraged to seek out pastoral care or professional counselling.

Who Can Mentor?

In summary, some helpful questions to assess whether you or someone else has the potential to be a good mentor are:

- Is there a desire to see others grow and be equipped?
- Is there evidence of the fruit of the Spirit?
- Is there a personal faithful relationship with Jesus?
- Is there a willingness to be accountable and transparent?
- Is there an ability to communicate the message, methods, and character of Jesus?

It's not about being perfect but about having a willingness and a good foundation.

A desire to see others grow and be equipped...

If you are wondering if you could be a mentor a good place to begin is to consider your answer to the question - do I have a desire to see others deepen their relationship with Jesus and grow in their character and capacity to navigate their current situation or season in a way that is faithful to Jesus?



To be a mentor is to be an instrument of change in the life of another. A good mentor is someone who desires to be this for others and who desires for that change to be for the glory of God. A good mentor is one who desires to see others grow in Christlikeness and who desires to partner with the Spirit to see others become more and more who Jesus has created them to be.

Evidence of the fruit of Spirit...

Next to consider is the inventory of things the Bible gives which you can expect to see in the life of a person who is increasingly living in the power of the Holy Spirit. If you are someone who can testify to a growing fruitfulness over time in these areas, then you likely have the capacity to be a good mentor:

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22, NIV)

A personal and faithful relationship with Jesus...

Because being a mentor means taking an influential and important role in another person's life, it can sound like something reserved for experts or people with decades of wisdom. But that's not necessarily the case. If you have a relationship with Jesus, are living in community, and you are growing in your own personal faith and discipleship, you can come alongside others and share your wisdom and encouragement. Remember, God uses people who are themselves in need of change as instruments of the same kind of change in others.

A willingness to be transparent, vulnerable, and accountable...

Perhaps the best way to know if you would be helpful to others in a mentoring role is to ask church leadership or other mature Christians to tell you honestly whether they think you would be a good mentor. If you struggle to ask that question out of fear of what they might say, then that is possibly a sign that you have some growth to do before stepping into a mentoring role. If you are going to take a role of calling another to an accountable and transparent relationship with yourself, it is important you are willing to engage in those same kind of relationships.

Ability to communicate the message, method, and character of Jesus...

Another way to assess your readiness to be a mentor is to consider how well equipped you are to be an ambassador for Jesus (i.e. represent Jesus to another). The Bible uses the word ambassador to describe who we are to be in Christ, but this isn't something we just arrive at. A good mentor is able to understand, communicate and represent in different contexts:

- The message of Jesus
- The methods of Jesus
- The character of Jesus





What are some key foundational components of discipleship mentoring?

A mentor is an instrument of change in God's hands to minister his transforming grace, truth, and wisdom into the life of another. What follows are some key concepts to help lay the foundation of a fruitful mentoring relationship.

1. Biblical Awareness

These following biblical truths are helpful for both the mentor and the mentee to consider and be aware of within the context of a mentoring relationship:

- Truth #1** We need God and his truth to live as we were meant to live. We are dependent upon the Lord because this is how we have been created.
- Truth #2** Each of us has been called by God to be his instruments of change in the lives of others.
- Truth #3** Our behaviour is rooted in the thoughts and motives of our hearts. God changes people's lives as his grace transforms their heart. In mentoring, the heart is always the first target.
- Truth #4** Jesus has called us to be his ambassadors, following his message, methods, and character.
- Truth #5** Being an instrument of change involves incarnating the love of Christ by sharing in people's struggles, identifying with their suffering, and extending God's grace as we call them to change.
- Truth #6** Being an instrument of change means seeking how to know people by guarding against false assumptions, asking good questions, and interpreting information in a distinctly biblical way.
- Truth #7** Being an instrument of change means speaking the truth in love.
- Truth #8** Being an instrument of change means helping people do what God calls them to do by clarifying responsibilities, offering loving accountability, and reminding them of their identity in Christ.





2. God Awareness

Who we understand God to be will greatly impact how we engage in mentoring, shaping how care and guidance is provided and received. Here are several attributes of God that are particularly relevant for both the mentor and the one they are mentoring:

- **God's Love:** The unconditional love of God assures us of our inherent worth and God's unwavering commitment toward us and those we are seeking to mentor.
- **God's Mercy and Grace:** Understanding that God is merciful and gracious helps us recognize that we can approach God without fear of rejection.
- **God's Sovereignty:** Awareness of God's sovereignty—His ultimate control and authority over the world—reassures us that nothing happens outside of God's knowledge and will.
- **God's Wisdom:** Belief in God's infinite wisdom helps us trust that He can bring good out of even the worst situations and that His plans are always for our good.
- **God's Presence:** Knowing that God is always with us provides great comfort.
- **God's Faithfulness:** Trust in God's faithfulness - that He keeps His promises and does not change - offers stability, hope and assurance.
- **God's Healing:** God can heal and provide deliverance in even the most challenging of situations.
- **God's Listening and Speaking:** The belief that God listens to prayers and can communicate with His people through various means (e.g., Scripture, the Holy Spirit, other people) provides a basis for encouraging prayer and seeking guidance in all situations.
- **God's Community:** Understanding that God exists in eternal relationship (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) and calls people into a community (the Church) underscores the importance of relationships in healing and growth.
- **God's Justice:** For those who have been wronged or are struggling with issues of injustice, knowing that God is just and will one day right all wrongs can offer a deep sense of hope and a reason to pursue justice in the present.

Remembering these aspects of God helps to provide a theological foundation for a mentoring relationship and offer a multi-faceted source of comfort, encouragement, and guidance for those being mentored.







3. Self Awareness

An honest and humble awareness of our own strengths, weaknesses, giftings, personality, limitations, life-experience, and emotional triggers is necessary to both the giving and receiving of guidance and care. We don't have to be, nor will we ever be, perfect but one way we can ensure that we are a safe person to speak into the lives of others is to have a mature and robust sense of ourselves – our strengths and our weaknesses. Our weaknesses aren't a problem when they are known and submitted to God. In fact, our weaknesses can often be the vehicle through which God does his best work in both us and others.

Consider:

- What aspects of your giftings, personality, history will help you to be effective in mentoring others?
- What areas of weakness and/or fears can you identify that might compromise your capacity?
- What limitations can you identify?
- How do you think other people perceive you?

4. Listening

A good mentoring relationship begins with being able to listen well and a helpful tool in this context is 3-way listening. 3-way listening is focused and intentional. It requires that the listener be aware of some simple, yet profound truths about a deeper kind of listening. 3-way listening involves: listening to the other, listening to the Holy Spirit and listening to yourself.

Listening embodies several crucial aspects that are fundamental in any mentoring relationship. It is first and foremost an act of loving submission, both to God and to the other person. This submissive stance allows the listener to act as a conduit through which the mentee might hear not only their own thoughts but also discern God's voice, fostering an environment where they feel accepted and loved.

As a mentor, by presenting yourself as an available instrument for God's use, you enable His presence in the mentoring process, assisting the mentee in gaining clarity, guidance, or healing.

However, it is important to be wary of operating from a place of insecurity; attempting to fix the mentee's problems immediately can lead to frustration and strain in the relationship from both sides. Effective listening, therefore, involves a balance of empathy, patience, and openness to God's leading, without rushing to solve issues prematurely.



The three aspects to listening well are:

Between the Listener and God

- We actively, but silently, pray for the person while listening. We may pray, “Holy Spirit, bring clarity and healing,” or, “Holy Spirit, bring your wisdom.” In addition, the Holy Spirit may bring a scripture or a question to your attention. Pray for discernment, speaking as you feel prompted to do so, seeking to put all ego needs aside.

Between the Listener and the Speaker

- A simple question may help the person reflect on what they have said, like, ‘Thinking back on what you chose to share, did you notice anything that stood out to you?’ or ‘Is there something that God might be directing your attention toward?’

Between the Listener and Themselves

- Not to be overlooked, is the aspect of listening to oneself. It is useful to pay attention to what comes to mind about your life or story while you are listening to another and discern what wisdom from your own life is relevant for the one you are mentoring.

Prompts for Entering into 3-Way Listening

- Consciously remind yourself that you are there to serve the other person.
- Your body language tells them that you are listening with your whole self, and that you’re not rushed or distracted.
- Trust that God knows what is best, and that you don’t always have to have an answer. Release your ego’s need to be noticed as smart, wise, or insightful.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to release you to only speak what he deems useful.

It is interesting that “3-way listening” requires us to NOT do many things. Listening in this deep, spiritual manner requires us to say ‘NO’ to our normal habits of casual, conversational listening so we make room for more beautiful interactions that are graced with God’s presence and lead us down a path toward a deep knowing of God, oneself, and others.

This advice may seem a little counter intuitive in a mentoring relationship where the mentee is seeking the advice of the mentor but these principles of 3-way listening are a powerful way to ensure that God is present and is leading the mentoring relationship.



ESTABLISHING AND PRACTICING A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP.



How to find a mentor

Sometimes someone will find themselves prompted to ask someone if they would like to be mentored by them but more often than not a mentoring relationship begins by someone seeking out a mentor. If you recognise a desire or a need for a mentor, how do you begin?

- Be clear in your own mind about what it is that you need.
- Think and pray about the people you know who might have:
 - Experience and wisdom relevant to your situation.
 - Godly character.
 - Time and capacity to share their life with you.
- Pray for eyes to see who it is that the Lord might be leading you to.
- Ask church leadership who they think might be a good mentor for you.
- When you think you've found someone who might be a good fit, make the ask but don't take it personally if the answer is no.

Establish expectations

The sooner expectations are clarified and agreed upon in any relationship then the greater the likelihood of the relationship being fruitful. When expectations haven't been discussed or clearly established, it can become the cause of resentment and disappointment. To prevent frustration in your mentoring relationship, planning and establishing some realistic expectations right from the beginning is vital. In the words of Brené Brown, 'clear is kind'.

Here are a few common expectations mentor and mentee typically agree on and could be established at the beginning of a relationship:

- Always maintain confidentiality between one another.
- Keep any commitments that are made.
- Evaluate the relationship at various points within an agreed-upon time frame.
- When and how often will you meet.
- Accept and value one another's differences.
- When you meet, give each other your full and undivided attention.
- Be responsible for your own learning and actions (mentee).
- Build trust with one another by being open, honest, and vulnerable.





Specific tips for Mentees

These practical strategies can help mentees build a relationship with the mentors:

- Remember, you are responsible for your own growth and development. It is up to you to identify objectives and keep the relationship moving forward.
- Use active listening skills at all times.
- Be prepared to ask for specific advice on your skill sets, ideas, plans, and goals. The more specific you are, the better.
- If you get some constructive feedback, don't defend yourself or get upset. Thank your mentor for being honest with you and practice follow-up on the feedback given to you. Plan to be open to trying new things (mentee).

Now that you have some understanding of what mentors and mentees typically expect of one another, use the below template to develop your own list of mentoring expectations. You could refer to this document as your Mentoring Relationship Agreement, or Mentoring Covenant depending on the kind of language that is meaningful to you.

In forming your agreement, you can use any of the expectations you have read about and/or come up with your own set of expectations. Some great questions to ask and discuss with one another in the initial stages of a mentoring relationship are:

- "How would a define the word mentor?"
- "What does mentoring look like to me?"
- "What do I want out of this mentoring relationship?"
- "Are there any boundaries that need to be established?"
- "When and how often are we going to meet?"
- "How will we hold ourselves accountable to this relationship?"
- "How will we deal with potential tension and conflict?"





A Mentoring Framework: Love-Know-Speak-Do

What follows is a framework that a mentor can apply in a mentoring relationship that will help them to be an effective instrument of change in their mentee's life. This framework is based around 4 simple aspects.

- Love** Desire and be willing to work for your mentees good.
- Know** Develop an understanding of the mentee at a heart level, seeking to know their hopes, dreams, values, and fears.
- Speak** Bring God's truth to bear for this specific person in this specific situation.
- Do** Help your mentee apply what they are learning.

Love

What do relationships that promote personal change look like? A few areas that Scripture highlights when it calls us to love someone in a way that promotes God's work of transformation in their lives are:

1. Enter the person's world.
2. Identify with suffering.
3. Accept with agenda.

Enter the Person's World

- Resist the temptation to be entirely problem focused. Instead, seek to discern what is going on at a heart level in your mentee by pursuing empathy through understanding.
- Look for entry gates into a person's heart. An entry gate is a particular person's experience of a situation. To recognise an entry gate you don't ask yourself, 'what are their problems?' Instead, you ask, 'what is this person struggling with in the midst of the situation, or what has a grip on them? Some entry gate questions:
 - What are you encouraged by right now?
 - What growth challenges are you desiring to engage in/ explore?
 - What are you struggling with right now?
 - What are you feeling?
 - What are you afraid of right now?
 - What questions do you have of God?
 - What part of this situation is getting to you the most?
 - What regrets are you struggling with?





Identify with Sufferings

- Sometimes we are unsure of what to say and do when people are expressing some kind of suffering. How do we identify with and encourage our mentee if they are experiencing some kind of suffering?
- 2 Cor 1:3-11 provide a helpful paradigm and process.
- The Paradigm:
 - God is the source of true compassion.
 - The comfort we have received from God has ministry in view.
 - God wants us to share in Christ's sufferings.
 - Even our suffering does not belong to us, but to the Lord.
 - There is hope in the midst of suffering.
- The Process: (telling Christ-centred stories)
 - What story might you have that will help connect you with your mentee in their suffering. Tell your story in a way that breaks down the misconception you are different from your mentee.
 - As you tell your story, be honest in describing your struggles and failures.
 - Always tell your story in a way that makes God the key actor and hero.
 - Always make it clear that ultimately you aren't what your mentee needs but God is.
 - In the telling of your story be mindful of the temptation to overshare or to make it about you.

Accept with Agenda

- The mentor is to be a nonjudgmental presence in the life of the mentee, but this doesn't mean that we approve of ungodly thoughts and behaviours. So, we accept the mentee but where correction is needed, we bring truth to the situation.
- Remember, God's grace and acceptance is never the end of his work, it is the beginning. God's grace always leads to change.
- Therefore, we refuse to condemn but we also refuse to condone.

Relationships built this way become places where God's work can thrive. They become places where people are renewed, restored, rebuilt, and refined; where God is central and given the glory that is his due.







Know

You cannot mentor well someone you do not know. Some prompts in this area to help a mentor deepen their knowing of their mentee are:

- Don't assume – ask. A key stumbling block in the process of truly coming to know someone is the problem of assumptions. When we assume, we don't ask. If we don't ask, we open ourselves up to a world of invalid conclusions and misunderstandings.
- Make sure your conclusions are correct.
 - Ask your mentee to define their terms (what?)
 - Ask them to clarify what they mean with concrete, real-life examples (how?)
 - Ask them to explain why they responded as they did (why?)
- Ask good questions. Asking good questions is vital to helping people face who they really are and what they are really doing. It facilitates a true foundation from which to pursue change, transformation, and equipping.
 - Ask open-ended questions that can't be answered with a yes or no.
 - What? questions uncover general information.
 - How? questions reveal the way something was done.
 - Why? questions uncover a person's purposes, desires, goals, and motivations.
- Apply a biblical filter to the information you are hearing. This means to look at your mentee's life from the perspective of a biblical worldview. Discipleship mentoring is more about perspective, identity, and calling than about fixing what is broken.
- Be patient. God does not seem to be in the fearful hurry that often drives our efforts to help people. It takes time to get to know someone so that you can bring the transforming grace of Christ to people as they really are in the midst of what they are really facing.





Speak

A vital and necessary component of a mentoring relationship is speaking the truth in love and sometimes this truth will come in the form of a correction or challenge which can feel confrontational.

- A starting point for a biblical understanding of confrontation is to remember that biblical confrontation is:
 - grounded in the first great commandment (to love God).
 - grounded in the second great commandment (to love neighbour).
 - our moral responsibility in every relationship.
 - meant to be more of a lifestyle than an unusual event.
 - never motivated by impatience, frustration, hurt or anger.
- Before we bring a word of truth that is potentially confronting, we begin by examining our own heart. If we don't, we can:
 - Personalise what isn't personal.
 - Be adversarial in our approach.
 - Confuse our opinion with God's will.
 - Settle for quick fixes that don't address the heart.
- We prayerfully consider and discern what it is that God wants to accomplish in the person.
- Remember our kingdom worker identity. We have been chosen to pursue relationships with a sense of redemptive calling. In a mentoring relationship we have the opportunity to see God miraculously transform our mentee, so we look for ways to bring those we are mentoring to a place of true heart repentance.
- Don't forget the gospel. We can confront people with areas where correction is needed but sometimes what is needed is to be confronted with and reminded of the gospel. The goal of confrontation isn't to force behavioural change, but to encourage people's new natures with the gospel.
- The word 'confrontation' can be a somewhat loaded term so you might find it help to use the word 'carefrontation' to help reframe the act of bringing a word of correction to another.





Do

Change and equipping always demand a deeper understanding of the things of God and a careful application of those truths to our lives. To help people with how to live a “changed and being changed” life seek to pursue these four objectives:

- Establish a mentoring agenda.
 - This is simply a plan to help the one we are mentoring experience change and growth. This needs to have biblical perspective.
 - What has God taught, promised, commanded, warned, encouraged, and done that addresses this situation?
 - What are God's goals for change for this person in this situation?
 - What are some biblical methods for accomplishing God's goals of change?
- Clarify responsibility.
 - The Christian life can be boiled down to two words: trust and obey. We work to entrust the things that are out of our control to God, and then be faithful to obey his commands.
 - What things does the mentee need to take responsibility for and what do they need to entrust to God?
- Instil identity in Christ.
 - People need encouragement as they pursue the hard work of change.
 - Being reminded of our identity in Christ is something that we all need to hear spoken to our hearts from those we trust and who know us.
- Provide accountability.
 - A fruitful mentoring relationship requires accountability. It requires a willingness on the part of the mentor to roll up their sleeves and get alongside the one they are mentoring.
 - Ask yourself three questions as you seek to provide accountability:
 - What kinds of ongoing help might this person need?
 - How often and how will I be in contact with them?
 - What other resources could be helpful?







DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.



As stated at the beginning, this document is intended to provide a broad outline, framework and prompts to help establish healthy and fruitful discipleship mentoring relationships within our church family. If there are questions you have that aren't addressed here, then please contact a member of the Pastoral Team who will be more than happy to help.

Also, if you find yourself struggling within your mentoring relationship, either as a mentor or as a mentee, then also please reach out to a member of the Pastoral Team. All types of relationships have their challenges, and it doesn't mean you are failing if you are finding things difficult. Discipleship mentoring relationships are something that we value, and we are more than happy to do what we can to help these relationships be edifying for all involved.





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