

MentorNet # 23 Applications of Christian Mentoring

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The Holy Spirit uses Christian mentors in several powerful ways for the benefit of congregations and communities. Commonly practiced applications of Christian mentoring include these:

1. *Christians mentor others for non-pastoral purposes.* Many Christian coaches, teachers, caring neighbors and business associates let their light shine for Christ by giving loving attention and guidance in non-religious areas of life.
2. *Others make disciples of new believers and their families,* establishing the foundations of obedience and faith.
3. *Parents train their children* by example to pray daily and to feed on God's Word.
4. *Some counsel persons and families that have problems.* This type of mentoring is often called 'member care'.
5. *More-experienced Christian workers apprentice less-experienced ones for church ministries,* such as helping believers to do better counseling, to witness for Christ, to training others, and to implement mercy ministries.
6. *Shepherds and missionaries apprentice novice leaders,* including shepherding elders (pastors), church planters and other types of missionaries, by training them the way Jesus and His apostles did so in the New Testament. For example, a pastor of a mother church may coach a less-experienced pastor in a daughter church.

The authors of MentorNet serve almost exclusively with the last of those listed above, apprenticing novice leaders. Mentored training is perhaps one of the most neglected areas of vital, fruitful ministry among evangelicals today.

Mentoring as a method to train new leaders was developed and used widely by God's people long before Mentor (from whose name the word derives) served as a counselor to Odysseus in Homer's *Iliad*. Today, secular educators and trainers take advantage of mentoring more wisely and widely than do most Evangelical Christian training institutions.

It is sad that so many Bible colleges and seminaries overlook such a biblical, proven form of education. Thus, many young people in training are being robbed of one of God's most precious endowments to His church.

George Patterson recalls, "God used mentors (although we did not call them that at the time) to prepare me to receive Christ, lead my wife and me to a mission field, and to follow New Testament guidelines when we got there. Almost weekly I hear someone mention similar fruit from mentoring, including some in the secular world."

How prevalent was mentoring as a training tool among God's people in the Bible? Scripture shows many instances of mentoring. Some trained 'one on one,' others coached several at once. The size of the group must be small enough for all to listen to each other and to deal with their concerns. Jesus sometimes mentored twelve, other times three or even one. In Scripture, mentoring resulted in generational 'chains' with several 'links' of mentors whose apprentices mentored others, and so on.

Some of the mentoring chains found in Scripture include these:

Jethro mentored **Moses**,

Moses mentored **Joshua** and the **elders of Israel**.

Joshua mentored the other **army leaders**.

God originally gave the Ten Commandments for the use of newly-named elders. These included leaders of 10, of 50, of 100 and of 1000. The shepherding of the people occurred mostly in small groups of ten (Exodus 18–20).

Deborah mentored **Barak**.

Eli mentored **Samuel**

Samuel mentored **Saul** and **David** who became Israel's greatest king.

Ahithophel and **Nathan** the prophet also mentored **David**.

David mentored his army commanders and government officials, to establish the united nation of Israel. **David** also mentored **Solomon**.

Solomon mentored the **Queen of Sheba**, who returned to her people with his wisdom in the form of Proverbs that applied God's law.

Elijah mentored **Elisha**.

Elisha mentored king **Jehoash** and others.

Daniel mentored **Nebuchadnezzar**, who humbled himself before God.

Mordecai mentored **Esther**

Esther mentored **King Artaxerxes**, which resulted in liberating God's people.

Jesus mentored the **twelve apostles** who established the Christian church.

The twelve mentored hundreds of other leaders, including **Paul**.

Paul mentored **Titus**, **Timothy** and many others (2 Timothy 2:2).

Timothy mentored "**faithful men**" such as Epaphras.

Epaphras and the other faithful men mentored "**others also**" which led to a chain reaction that resulted in dozens of new churches in Asia (Colossians 1:1 & 7; 4:12-13).

Philip mentored the **Ethiopian official** who received Christ and was baptized in the desert.

Priscilla and Aquila mentored **Apollos**, for a much improved ministry.

In most ministries across most nations, it is far wiser for you to mentor novice leaders on the job, to meet the needs of new cells and congregations, than it would be to send them away to Bible school or seminary to learn an analytical, lecture method of education with a lot of theory.

Such graduates may consider themselves to be professionals and expect to be given congregations that can support the life style of a professional. Likewise, they often cause their congregations to stagnate. After months or years of practical service, some mentored leaders may benefit from more formal education, especially if they must communicate with more highly educated people in urban communities. The authors of MentorNet teach in both arenas, making a clear distinction of where and when to apply both.

We urge you to consider prayerfully the potential value of various applications of mentoring for your church or organization, keeping in mind that the final purpose for which God inspired Scripture was not simply to inform us but that God's people may be equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

To find mentoring tools and sites, visit <<http://www.MentorAndMultiply.com>>.

For information on Train & Multiply® write George Patterson <GPatterson@MentorNet.ws>.

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