

Mentoring and Coaching for the Church

Biblical Basis and Examples of Mentoring

Mentoring and coaching are Biblical. They follow a pattern that Jesus used when he served as a mentor and coach to the apostles and developed a small group of leaders who in turn served as mentors and coaches to early church leaders who mentored and coached members who became mentors and coaches to new members. That is one of the reasons that church growth and Christian growth was so fast in the first century.

Here a Few of the Many Examples of Mentoring and Coaching in the Bible.

Solomon affirmed the wisdom of mentoring - **Proverbs 1:5; 9:9; 27:17**

Jethro and Moses – **Exodus 18:13-24**

Moses and Joshua – **Exodus 24:13**

Naomi and Ruth – **Ruth 1:8-18**

Eli and Samuel – **1 Samuel 3:1**

Elijah and Elisha – **2 Kings 2:1-15**

Jesus and his followers – **John 1:39; Matthew 4:19; 28:19-20**

Barnabas and Paul – **Acts 9:27**

Barnabas and John Mark – **Acts 15:37-39**

Paul and Silas – **Acts 15:40**

Priscilla with her husband Aquila and Apollos in Ephesus – **Acts 18:26**

Lois and Eunice and their grandson and son, Timothy – **2 Timothy 1:5**

Paul and Timothy – **2 Timothy 2:2**

Older women and younger women – **Titus 2:3-5**

Are you interested in developing others to help them achieve more of their potential?

Are you interested in becoming all that you can be?

If your answer is yes, this mentoring and coaching approach will offer you a development strategy beneficial to all concerned – the mentor or coach, learner, and the church. The focus of this material is on informal, unstructured mentoring relationships. However, this material is also applicable within a formal, structured program.

Compare Mentoring and Coaching

Some people distinguish between mentoring and coaching. We are not making a distinction between mentoring and coaching. Some people use these terms interchangeably. Coaching is one of the skills of an effective mentor. Effective mentoring and coaching require many of the same skills. There are different types of mentoring just as there are different types of coaching.

Different Types of Mentoring or Coaching

- Helping a person shift her or his thinking.
- Listening when the person has a problem.
- Pointing out ineffective communication or behaviors.
- Providing appropriate information when needed.
- Assisting the development of needed skills.
- Delegating authority or giving permission.
- Encouraging exploration of options.

What Is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a positive and powerful process that enables people to develop more of their potential. It establishes a relationship and partnership between a more skilled or experienced person to help a less skilled or less experienced person to achieve agreed upon goals developing knowledge and skills. Mentoring is **not** controlling or dominating another person.

What Is a Mentor?

A mentor is a wise and trusted advisor, guide, counselor, coach, or teacher.

A mentor helps someone learn something that might have been learned more slowly, less well, or not at all.

A mentor often is outside the learner's group.

Not all mentors are formal leaders, but all effective leaders should be mentors. Mentoring is an inherent trait of leadership.

We are all potentially mentoring others and being mentored at the same time only at different levels. Everyone needs a mentor, including mentors.

What Is the Mentor's or Coach's Role?

- Supporting and facilitating growth and development.
- Role model who sets a positive example.
- Confidant who builds a trusting and safe environment for learning and growth.
- Teacher who understands the Bible and the church.
- Catalyst who fosters creativity, innovation, and problem solving.
- Guide who willingly shares successes and failures of his/her experiences.
- Listener who serves as sounding board.
- Straight talker who provides honest and candid feedback from his/her vantage point.

What Is a Learner?

A learner is one who gains knowledge, comprehension, information, or skills.

What Is the Learner's Role?

- Committed to growth and development.
- Willing to share concerns and questions.
- Desire to grow in knowledge, skills, and experiences.
- Receptive and motivated to act on feedback, suggestions, and new ideas.
- Dedicated to investing the time needed for growth and development.

Who Can Benefit from Mentoring or Coaching?

Michael Jordan was among the greatest basketball players the sport has ever known. He had such raw talent and ability that he never needed a coach to help him develop, right? Of course not. Even the greatest athletes need coaches who can watch their performance from a different perspective, help them identify improvement areas, praise their successes, and hold them accountable for their commitments. But sports is not the only area where coaching is a helpful tool.

Why can't ordinary people have mentors and coaches to help them improve their work and their personal life? Well, they can. Everyone can benefit from mentoring and coaching. Effective mentoring and coaching produce many benefits or results that are mutually beneficial. Everyone wins: the mentor or coach, learner, and the church.

Benefits for Mentors and Coaches

- Enjoy the personal satisfaction of helping people achieve more of their potential.
- Contribute to another person's growth and development.
- Gain a reputation for successfully developing others.
- Sharpen coaching and leadership skills.
- Use the opportunity to share knowledge and experience.
- Maintain enthusiasm and motivation.
- Avoid feeling like "I am the only one" by actively interacting with others who share the same vision.

Benefits for Learners

- Use an available sounding board for developing new ideas when you are unsure or need reassurance and support.
- Obtain counsel and coaching from a dependable source when dealing with difficulties or seeking direction and guidance.
- Gain insight into the culture, values, vision, mission, strategy, norms, and protocols.
- Change self-perception and see the potential that exists.
- Receive encouragement, reinforcement, and positive feedback when doing a good job.
- Grow gradually into responsibilities instead of a sink or swim approach to learning new responsibilities and taking responsible risks.

Benefits for the Church

- Accelerate growth and development to increase skills, knowledge, and confidence.
- Energize the congregation by developing more capable people to share the load.
- Provide stability because others will be prepared to serve in key roles when a leader moves on.
- The power of influence is distributed among more people.
- Reduce overload and prevent potential burnout of workers and leaders.
- Create a culture where mentoring and coaching occur naturally.

Benefits for Leadership

Leadership development through mentoring and coaching will:

- Identify potential leaders and inspire them to assume leadership.
- Develop more capable, competent, and committed leaders.
- Establish a growing base of talent and leadership.

What about Multiple Mentors?

Why settle for only one mentor when you can benefit from multiple mentors? A single mentor or coach may not fulfill the entire development process of a learner. It often takes a series of coaches or multiple mentors for different phases of a learner's development.

One of my mentors prompted me to consider assembling a "personal board of directors." He helped me to see that it takes a variety of mentors and coaches to meet my various needs. I have benefitted from many mentors and coaches. Some of them were not even aware of how they helped me. My examples.

Mentors and coaches can be within or outside the organization. They can come from above, below, or on your peer level in the organization structure. They may even be younger than you are if they provide a needed area of expertise. Mentoring is not always based on age.

What Are Possible Mentoring and Coaching Pitfalls?

Be aware of these possible pitfalls:

- A mismatch between the mentor or coach and learner.
- Unrealistic or undefined expectations.
- Lack of commitment to the relationship.
- Inappropriate use of power or authority.
- Criticizing instead of providing feedback.
- Advising instead of listening and providing information.
- Rescuing rather than helping.
- Breaches of confidentiality.
- Sexual attraction.
- Ignoring mentoring and coaching guidelines.

Mentoring and Coaching Guidelines

These guidelines will ensure a more successful and satisfying experience for everyone involved. Remember that no one is perfect and no relationship is ideal. Make the most of every situation.

Effective Mentors and Coaches . . .	Successful Learners . . .
Seek permission to mentor or coach	Grant permission to be mentored or coached
Believe in the potential to develop and grow	Commit to expand their capabilities
Keep shared information confidential unless release is given	Communicate openly and honestly; maintain confidentiality
Co-create goals and plans together	Co-create goals and plans together
Help keep goals challenging, reachable, and specific	Know when goals are suitable
Watch and observe carefully	Ask for clarification; ask for help
Provide feedback; state facts and observations	Accept feedback and act on it
Listen attentively and empathetically	Listen attentively and empathetically
Are patient	Are patient
Encourage responsible risk taking	Take responsible risks
Permit the possibility of mistakes	Accept responsibility and accountability
Endorse experimentation to try new approaches; foster a safe to fail environment	Challenge old habits and ideas; open and receptive to new ways and ideas
Guide powerful conversations	Engage in powerful conversations
Make requests	Make requests
Respond to all requests – accept, decline, or suggest an alternative	Respond to all requests – accept, decline, or suggest an alternative
Encourage	Accept encouragement
Check in and meet regularly (have a set time to meet)	Keep in contact and meet regularly (have a set time to meet)
Respect each other	Respect each other
Ask insightful questions to encourage discussion of what is being learned	Answer thoughtfully and honestly
Help others see what they have trouble seeing	Look at self through new eyes
Learn from each other	Learn from each other
Share in a meaningful project	Share in a meaningful project
Pray for each other	Pray for each other

More Suggestions for Effective Mentoring or Coaching

Use curiosity to stimulate curiosity. Demonstrate enthusiasm for the learning process. Believe in it and show excitement. Great mentors and coaches are not only curious; they are excited by the opportunity to stimulate others' curiosity. The attitude should be, I can't wait to see the lights come on for you!

Ask questions that create insight. The intent of questioning is to facilitate more reflective thinking. This will help the individual to have a greater understanding of their own behavior and the impact it has on others.

Ask questions that begin with "What" or "How". "What were your reasons for doing that?" can sound very different from "Why did you do that?" A sentence that begins with the word "why" and ends in a question mark is usually perceived as judgmental.

Support without rescuing. Provide support and encouragement while the learner works to master new skills. The challenge is determining when too much support becomes rescuing and when too little support becomes a sign of indifference. Sometimes people are tempted to take help to the level of interference. For example, saying, "Let me just show you how to do that," instead of asking, "What do you think you should do next?"

Mentoring or Coaching Action Plan

Here is how to begin developing a personal action plan for mentoring or coaching.

1. List those people who you might be able to mentor or coach and why.
2. Determine what you will do to begin building relationships with those you might be able to mentor or coach.
3. List those people who might be able to mentor or coach you and why.
4. Determine what you will do to begin building relationships with those who can mentor or coach you.
5. Begin your experience by discussing your action plan with a trusted advisor who can coach or mentor you regarding this plan. Ask for their feedback and input.

Jesus and the apostle Paul were always in a mentoring mode.

We should follow their example of mentoring others.

1 Corinthians 11:1 - "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

Philippians 4:9 - "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."