

## Being a Mentor

*“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching...” Acts 2:42 ESV*

Discipleship is possible by using the most successful discipling process of all time. It is a process Jesus, Paul and the early church used. A process simply called, mentoring.

Did you know that teaching in large crowds was not Jesus' preferred discipleship method? The reality is it can be very challenging to disciple people that way. The biggest group Jesus ever put serious time into was seventy-two individuals. But Jesus focused on twelve and even those twelve were often narrowed down to three (Peter, James, and John).

Yes, Jesus taught crowds, but he trained the disciples. He walked side by side with them and explained the “why”, “how” and “what” to them. Jesus didn't leave us a checklist of how His mentoring process would work. He didn't need to. That had already been done thousands of years before he was born.

Here are some practical ways to enter a mentor relationship with someone and why...

### **Start with One**

When Moses' father-in-law Jethro saw Moses answering all the disputes for a nation of millions of people, he told him *“You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.” Exodus 18:18 ESV*

So Jethro proposed an innovative plan. Put others in charge of groups of 10, 50, 100 and 1,000, leaving Moses to deal with the Level 1,000 issues. (Ex 18:17-26) So it starts with. Prayerfully think about and pursue that one person and begin the journey. Don't be surprised if someone may even come to you!

### **You gotta Listen – A Lot**

Maybe the biggest oversight we make in mentoring is equipping others to become like us, instead of like Jesus. Helping someone become like Jesus doesn't start by talking at them but “listening to them”. Throughout the scriptures, take notice of how many conversations Jesus had. Jesus did what we need to do. He had conversations. Conversations in which he listened to others ideas, views, fears and hopes.

When we listen, we learn... We learn what talents, passions, gifts, and personality God gave them. Then we can begin to personalize your mentorship just by knowing more about the one you are going on the journey with.

### **Side by side...not from a distance**

Mentors don't spend a lot of time alone. Jesus did this with the disciples. After teaching crowds in parables, He'd gather the disciples around, answer their questions, explain deeper truths and even tell them why He taught the way He did. Mentoring has no shortcuts. It takes relationships. And relationships take time. Time spent together. Find your rhythm of

connecting. Serve together. Part of the journey of a successful mentorship is to be side by side with them for a season.

### **Lead with “WHY”**

If we want to raise disciples, we can't just tell them how to do things. They need to know why they're doing it. Remember, we're training disciples of Jesus, not clones of ourselves. If they don't know why they're doing things, they'll never be able to adapt and improve on it when needed.

We need an army of believers who can improvise, adapt, overcome and do things better than we did them.

### **Send them and trust them**

At some point you must send them off all by themselves. They won't do it exactly like you did it. They're not supposed to. The biggest word in this point is “trust.” At some point in our mentoring – and it needs to happen earlier, rather than later – we need to trust. Trust them, trust our mentoring and trust God that they can do it without us.

But don't end the mentoring here. Thinking we're done at this stage is one of the great danger zones of mentoring. Instead, we need to do what Jesus did.

### **Give Them Feedback**

Jesus sent off the seventy-two disciples in pairs, but he didn't leave them there. He had them report back, then he gave them further instruction on how to do it better the next time. Check out Luke 10 for a firsthand account of how Jesus did this. Be intentional about this great opportunity to celebrate the successes and evaluate growth opportunities.

### **Pay it Forward**

Mentoring that first person is the hardest part. It's likely to take a few opportunities before you find someone who will really follow through with it.

Along the journey, those who you are mentoring should be reminded that they will eventually be the mentor for someone else. Knowing this helps them focus on their own experience and it helps them keep their eyes open for who the next “One” might be.

This is where it starts getting fun. Don't wait. We need to turn disciples into mentors as soon as possible. Sometimes while they're still in the middle of their own mentoring process.

*Teaching creates students. Equipping prepares disciples. Making disciples is what the Great Commission is all about.*