

EQUIPPING

for intergenerational ministry

The value of Christian mentoring

If you look over your life, can you remember an adult that took the time to walk alongside you? Someone who took an interest in you. Maybe it was a youth leader or someone else in your congregation that encouraged you?

Mentoring is important. At the most basic level it guarantees that a young person has someone who cares about them. They are not alone in dealing with their day-to-day challenges. Little things that may seem easy or straightforward to us may be a major issue for a young person with little or no experience. Mentors can be an adult friend who is there to help and guide them and share how God has been present in their life.



Mentoring creates relationships, which in turn help create community within a congregation. It is a way of inviting people to share their lives, their stories, and their faith together. It leads to growth in faith in both younger and older people, as well as creating relationships that will enhance the life of the church. It is one way that every congregation can be involved in youth ministry in an enriching way.

“Many children’s and youth ministries say they want to have a 1:5 ratio of adults to kids (meaning they want one adult for every five kids) for their Sunday school class or small groups. What if we reversed that? What if we said we want a 5:1 adult-to-kid ratio—five adults caring for each kid? ... five adults whom you recruit to invest in your kid in little, medium, and big ways.” Dr Chap Clark, Sticky Faith 2011.

There are many styles of mentoring; it could be one-on-one, small groups, informal get-togethers, or formal sessions. Whatever the strengths, resources, or opportunities in your congregation, you can use them to build a program that benefits the lives of young people in your community in intentional relational ways.

Mentoring is most effective if it is over a long period of time. The longer the relationship continues the more influential it is in the life of the young person. Meeting on a regular basis for at least a year will give an opportunity for a young person to develop trust.



This also shows the young person that you are serious about playing a part in their life.

Given that the most effective mentoring relationships take time to develop, it is important that they are well matched. It is helpful if there is a common interest, whether sport, movies, or vocation. This provides a starting point for the relationship to allow for easy conversation or activity.



THE VALUE OF Christian mentoring

➤ Mentors help improve a young person's self-esteem.

➤ Mentors can help a young person grow in faith.

➤ Mentors can help young people develop their communication skills and help them relate well to all kinds of people in their church community.

➤ Adults who invest in the lives of young people with patience and unconditional love become bearers of God's presence.



As iron sharpens iron so one person sharpens another.
Proverbs 27:17