

MENTORING FOR MINISTRY

Helping Men Get Started in the Ministry

“But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel” (Philippians 2:22). Paul reflects with great satisfaction upon years of a fruitful mentoring relationship with Timothy. There was no one quite like Timothy, no one who shared such a kindred spirit (Philippians 2:19). When Paul was on the doorstep of heaven, he knew that he could confidently hand the keys of the Ephesian church to Timothy. Biblical ministry includes the perpetual process of pastoring protégés.

Pastor, you should be pouring your life into cultivating men for ministry. You should be producing preachers from your own ministry. Where do pastors, missionaries, and evangelists come from? They come from families and churches. They may *come through* fine Christian colleges and seminaries, but they largely *come from* the godly influence of parents, pastors, teachers, and Christian workers who pointed them toward ministry when they were young.

What young men need upon the completion of formal education is a thorough local church internship. They need a pastor to immediately train them on the job in the day-to-day work of local church ministry. The worst thing that graduates can do is to delay engagement in ministry, drift off into lucrative secular employment, and cool their zeal for ministry. These “no man’s land” years of young adulthood are dangerous years for even the best of Christian men. Many well-educated ministerial graduates fall away from their calling. Find men that you can mentor for ministry. They may not have attended college or seminary. They may be coming out of business, education, or the military with a heart to serve the Lord full-time. Establish a pastoral intern program as a vital component of your church and personal ministry. Every dollar and hour you invest is worthwhile as ministry is multiplied exponentially.

Pastor, these men are trophies of God’s grace with great potential. Many will have had the best Christian teaching from infancy through college and have had every advantage—fine parents, good friends, thorough Christian education, numerous opportunities, and solid churches. But they are inexperienced in life and ministry. They may have educational debt. They may not yet have met God’s choice of a life’s mate or perhaps their young marriage is just underway. They are gold. But they need the careful and patient mentoring of a seasoned shepherd. Most of today’s young adults gladly welcome mature mentors. They will hang on your words and grant to you hero status in their appreciation.

If you can employ them in your ministry, please do so. If you cannot not, then sacrifice time to help them in their after-work hours. One pastor mentored his protégé at 5:00 a.m. for years at his dining room table before the young man went off to work. Then the protégé became pastor of the church when the mentoring pastor moved to his next ministry. That is exactly how it ought to work.

Teach the young man how to know God through His Word. Teach him how to pray and pray with him. Show him how to write a sermon, and then give him opportunities to preach. Encourage him. Give him pointers. Keep it positive. Let the joy of ministry take hold in his

heart. Evangelize the lost together and show him how to disciple a new believer. Help him to develop an outgoing, friendly attitude along with a genuinely caring spirit. Interpersonal skills on all levels are critical for full-orbed effectiveness in ministry. Develop in him a good platform manner, a touch of winsome humor, and the ability to motivate through crisp, clear public announcements. Develop him into a balanced, effective teacher with basic expositional skills. If you will help him to learn how to organize and administrate activities for children and young people, he may eventually help you grow your church.

Recommend good books to read. Discuss those books together. There are so many aspects of mentoring a man for ministry. Reading can really help move the process along. Tap into online resources, even full courses. Develop in him an understanding of Bible doctrine, biblical ministry philosophy, biblical counseling skills, and legal and business aspects of ministry. Invite him to your church leadership meetings. Share important ecclesiastical issues with him. Show him how your missions program works. Explain the value of a church constitution. Take him on hospital calls and pastoral visits. Have your wife include his wife in her life and ministry. Enjoy relaxed time together as families. Teach him how to be the best husband and father.

One pastor shared how he had mentored a hundred men for ministry over his life. His sons followed him into the ministry. They could preach and serve. Their dad got them started young. His daughters are likewise very involved in ministry. He and his wife model what it means to mentor others for ministry. Today his life's fruitfulness extends far and wide. He mentored men for ministry!