

Policy for Mentoring

Christ Church, Ware

Last amended: 19th May 2010

With an ongoing commitment to discipleship the Cell Life team recognises that mentoring is a key way of supporting our young people and helping to move them on in their walk with God. Mentoring is the spiritual version of fitness coaching and should guide and encourage young people to take on the challenges of the Christian faith. Mentoring should seek to build a secure foundation for a young person to explore and practice the key teachings of Christianity, to be encouraged in what they succeed in, guided in areas that they struggle with and be increasingly released into God's purposes for their lives. As we walk with God it is essential that we all continue to grow in depth of faith. Below are some basic guidelines to be followed when a 'mentoring relationship' is undertaken.

Establishing a mentoring relationship

- Guiding a young person's life is a significant responsibility. To an extent all the Cell Life team are involved in this with each and every young person that we come into contact with. However, there may come a time when a young person looks to someone for insight and wisdom on a regular basis, or seems like they are looking for someone who they feel comfortable to do this with. At this point it may be appropriate to become more intentional about meeting up and entering into a mentoring relationship.
- It is good to be intentional about a mentoring relationship if that is what the young person wants ie. Establish with them that you could meet up on a regular basis to talk, teach, encourage, bless, support, pray for and hold the young person accountable in their walk with God.
- It can be a good idea to review your mentoring with the young person from time to time, to see if they want to continue with it. When a mentoring relationship comes to an end it is usually better to bring it to a formal close so that you both know where you stand. This is important because in being mentored you are allowing your mentor to ask questions and challenge you in a way that other friends may not. There may come a time when the young person wants this to cease. Of course this does not mean that the friendship you have grown ceases, and there may well still come times when you spend time chatting on a deeper level.

Meeting with Young People

- We recommend that you meet with a young person about once every 3 weeks / a month to give them specific 'mentoring time'. In the early stages of the mentoring you may choose to see them more to help establish the relationship. Giving them space between your meetings is important as it allows them to have time to exercise what you have spoken about.
- When you meet up, do so in a public place where you can still have confidential conversations. Please be aware of the safeguarding policy, but here are some key things to follow:
 - Mentoring meetings can happen in a public place ie a coffee shop, or an open park (in summer!)
 - They may happen in the church or the church centre when other people are about and are able to 'see' you.
 - All mentoring sessions must be accountable to the Young People's Ministry leaders by being logged in your 'mentoring book'. Details to be logged should include the time of meeting, who it is with, and location. If anything happens within the meeting that is unusual or a cause for concern it should also be logged alongside the details of the meeting.
 - If meeting a young person in their home, you should not go into their bedroom, and should meet in one of the family rooms where there is visibility or the door is left open and a parent or carer should be at home.
 - Any specific place for meeting not listed here should be visible and accountable – ie the Young People's Ministry leader must agree that it is an appropriate place!
- Establish good communication with the young person's parents. If they know who you are and that they can contact you at any time then they will be comfortable with you mentoring their son/daughter. This is particularly important for young people who come from un-churched families. Appendix 1 must be filled out and signed by the young persons parents if you enter a 'mentoring' relationship.
- Please keep the Young People's Ministry leader up to date with your mentoring relationship. You don't need to tell us the details or confidentiality of your meetings, just about how they are going generally and if you have any major concerns. This is for 2 main reasons a) so we can keep up to date if we have any contact from parents. B) to make sure that the young people are still being 'picked up' by someone.
- Please be aware of the information contained within the safeguarding policy. Most importantly remember that you cannot promise secrecy in what young people tell you. Affirm to them that things will be confidential, but that if things come up that you need to seek guidance on then you will need to speak to the Young People's Ministry leader or the child protection officer. Also remember that if you discuss something that has legal implications then you will need to pass it on. (ie. Any kind of abuse, or maybe the young person will tell you about a planned fight that is due to happen – you may be able to prevent that by telling the right people etc.)

The Golden rules in Mentoring (not a comprehensive list!)

We would like all mentoring to be

- **directive not prescriptive** – when giving advice or guidance don't lay down exactly what the young person must do and what you expect of them. By all means give your opinion and suggest what would be a good course of action but don't force anything upon them. We want to direct them on a good path, but to specifically prescribe something may make them feel uncomfortable about doing that, and then ultimately meeting up with you again. It is of course good to set a challenge or resolve for young people to aspire to, but these should always be discussed and agreed on by both of you, then they should be applied in a way that leaves room for mistakes or failures. Remember that just as much can be learnt in failure as can be learnt in success.

Case study – in encouraging Fred to read his bible on a regular basis we discussed why that would be good. He agreed that he needed to do this in order to grow in his relationship with God. I suggested that he might try to set himself a target for achieving this, to be intentional rather than just hoping it may happen. He agreed and decided to set an amount of time that he would spend each day reading. I suggested he could start by spending 10 mins each evening. He thought that was achievable and that he could even do more. We decided to leave it at 10 mins for now. I said I would pray that God would speak to him through the word and would enable him to read it on a regular basis. He set his mind to reading it each day for 10 mins. I told him that the next time we meet I would ask how it has been going and we would take it from there.

- **releasing not controlling** – at every step we want to release young people to become all that God wants them to be. If you are releasing you let them get on with it, you encourage them wherever possible, you risk them making mistakes but are always there to help pick up the pieces; you remember that they may be different to you in character and you give them space to be who they are. When we try to control a person we can become domineering and almost suffocate a person with our passionate intent for them to hit the mark. Remember that mentoring is not about cloning yourself in the life of another, it's about helping a person become more like Jesus. Jesus often made demands on peoples lives but he was always open-handed. He let people walk away from him if they were not up to his challenge (the rich young ruler for example) but never held people away either. In the same way we don't want to pin anyone down and make them feel as if they are being controlled. We can lay challenges down but always give them a way out and be releasing. At the end of the day a controlling relationship will not prosper anyone. Young people must be free to make their own decisions, you should be the agent to help them be released into the right ones not the leash that constrains them.

Helping to communicate this - In all of my mentoring I always tell the mentoree that I am completely FOR them. That I will not turn my back on them or walk away from them at any time. There may come a time when I am not FOR their actions or

choices, but I will still be there for them as long as they want me to be. In saying this they are more likely to ask for my input even if they mess up, and will know that they are not being controlled in their choices by me. This will hopefully mean that they choose to follow the right path anyway because they respect me releasing them.

- **encouraging not discouraging** – Always seek to encourage the young people. Even in challenging areas that could be tricky, try to find positive ways of doing this. Jesus brings hope into our life and we should seek to do just that as well. Bring His hope into situations and circumstances. If the young person has really slipped in their relationship then try not focus on what they shouldn't have done or be doing but inspire them with what they should be doing. Help them to realise where they may be going wrong but then grab their attention with what they could be doing, what God could do in and through them, how much more he has for them if they pursue Him. When you finish a mentoring time try to leave the young person feeling positive about carrying on, not beaten up because they have fallen so short.

Your responsibility as a mentor –

- It is good to 'practise what you preach', so if you are mentoring a young person we would expect you to be a practising member of the church. More than this we would suggest that you be mentored yourself and have an accountable relationship. As you go deeper with God, so you will be able to take others there too.
- Always seek to give biblical input. This means that you will need to be a man/woman of the word. Read it and feed from it yourself, then you will be ready to guide, encourage and challenge effectively.
- As a mentor you are serving the young person with whom you have a relationship. Remember that the relationship must be about giving not getting. It is about pouring out what God has given you in order that another may benefit and go on to give the glory to God. It is easy to fall in to the trap of 'enjoying being needed' by another, but the relationship should be about their need not yours. Continue to walk with God, rest in Him and seek to bring Him the glory in all things.
- No gifts should be given to the young person without parental permission. These should never be money and should always be suitable and appropriate.
- Don't give up! People are sinful so they sin. Don't be discouraged if a young person goes off the rails for a season. Be there for them, show outrageous grace whilst trying to guide and direct them. Remember that you were a teenager once and may well have done much worse than them!

Appendix 1

Permission for Mentoring

Dear Parents,

You will be pleased to hear that we are now in the position to formally begin the mentoring relationship between your son/daughter and their mentor. All parties have been consulted and are excited to proceed and see where God leads them.

Before any 1:1 mentoring commences I will be meeting with your young person and the mentor to discuss policy and boundaries. We would really like it if you could join us for this meeting so that you are fully aware of the process.

Before we go any further, please could you fill out the form below and return it to me for our records. No mentoring can begin until we know we have your permission. If you have any questions then please do not hesitate to be in touch,

Yours Sincerely,

Louise Douglas

Mentor _____

(all of our mentors are CRB checked and held accountable by the church)

Telephone number of mentor _____

Email of mentor _____

I am happy for my child _____ to see this mentor on a regular basis (usually once every 3-4 weeks), understanding that they will meet under the guidelines of Christ Church's policy for mentoring.

Telephone contact of parent/guardian _____

Email of parent/guardian _____

Signed by Parent/Guardian _____

Please make a note of the contact details of the mentor so that you can contact them at any time. We encourage contact with parents so please feel free to do that. Please

Please return this form to Louise Douglas.

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Young People's Ministry leader: