

A LEG UP



**A PASTORAL MENTORING
GUIDEBOOK**

A+CC

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American Fellowship of Cowboy Churches 2025



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PASTORAL MENTORING OVERVIEW

Overview

Pastoral mentoring refers to the practice of providing spiritual guidance, support, advice, and encouragement to individuals, that serve in a pastoral role within the church. A mentor, typically an experienced pastor or spiritual leader, helps mentees (often younger or less experienced individuals) grow in their faith, leadership skills, and personal development.

The mentor-mentee relationship focuses on nurturing the mentee's spiritual life, helping them navigate challenges in ministry, providing accountability, and encouraging growth in various aspects of life and faith.

Definition of "A Leg Up"

- » Helping someone improve their position.
- » To provide someone with help that makes it easier for them to achieve, advance or succeed.

Purpose

- » **Spiritual Guidance:** Helping them to deepen their relationship with God, providing biblical wisdom and counsel.
- » **Personal Development:** Encouraging growth in character, integrity, and life skills.
- » **Ministry Support:** Offering practical advice on how to handle the complexities of ministry, such as preaching, pastoral care, leadership and administration.
- » **Accountability:** Offering guidance while holding them accountable in their spiritual journey and ministry responsibilities.

In many cases, pastoral mentoring can be informal or formalized, depending on the needs of the mentee and the goals of the mentoring relationship.

KEY COMPONENTS OF A MENTORING PROGRAM

1. Program Goals

The purpose of the program should be clearly defined. It may aim to develop leadership skills, improve job performance, provide spiritual growth (in the case of pastoral mentoring), or help mentees transition into new roles.

2. Mentor-Mentee Pairing

A matching process is crucial to ensure compatibility between mentors and mentees. This may be based on shared interests, professional experience, spiritual alignment, or personal goals.

3. Structure and Guidelines

Programs typically have a formal structure outlining expectations, meeting frequency, communication methods, and program duration. This can include:

- » Regular one-on-one meetings
- » Group activities or workshops
- » Milestones or checkpoints to assess progress

4. Training and Support

Both mentors and mentees may undergo training to understand their roles, set goals, and communicate effectively. Mentors are often trained to listen actively, provide constructive feedback, and offer guidance.

5. Goal Setting and Planning

Each mentor-mentee relationship typically begins with setting clear, achievable goals. This might include developing specific skills, gaining insight into a profession, or deepening spiritual practices.

6. Evaluation and Feedback

Ongoing evaluation helps assess the effectiveness of the program. Surveys, interviews, or informal feedback sessions can be used to ensure both mentors and mentees are benefiting from the experience.

7. Duration

Programs often run for a set period, such as six months to a year, but the relationships can continue informally if both parties desire. Having a defined start and end allows for setting clear goals and reflecting on progress.

CORE GUIDELINES

Mentoring Guidelines serve as a framework for both mentors and mentees to follow in order to ensure a successful, respectful, and productive mentoring relationship. These guidelines can be adapted to different types of mentoring, whether it's pastoral, career-based, or personal development. Below are some core guidelines that can help guide a mentoring relationship:

1. Establish Clear Objectives and Goals

- » **For Mentees:** Set specific, achievable goals for what you want to gain from the mentoring relationship. These could include spiritual growth, career development, skill-building, or personal growth.
- » **For Mentors:** Clarify your role in supporting your mentee's goals and determine how best to provide guidance based on your own experiences and expertise.

2. Create an Agreement or Plan

Establish a mentoring agreement that outlines the structure of your relationship. This can include:

- » The frequency and duration of meetings (weekly, biweekly, monthly)
- » Preferred communication methods (in-person, virtual, email)
- » Expectations for both parties
- » Duration of the mentorship (fixed term or ongoing)
- » Confidentiality agreements, if needed.

3. Set Boundaries and Respect Time

- » **For Mentees:** Respect your mentor's time by coming prepared for meetings and sticking to the agreed-upon schedule.
- » **For Mentors:** Set clear boundaries regarding your availability and ensure that the relationship stays professional. Avoid overcommitting.

4. Build Trust and Maintain Confidentiality

A mentoring relationship must be built on mutual trust and respect. Both the mentor and mentee should feel comfortable sharing openly.

Confidentiality is crucial. Anything shared in the mentoring sessions should remain private, unless there are serious ethical concerns or harmful behavior involved.

5. Active Listening and Communication

Mentors should practice active listening by giving their full attention to the mentee, asking open-ended questions, and offering thoughtful feedback. Mentees should listen carefully to advice, express thoughts and feelings openly, and ask questions for clarity when needed.

Keep communication two-way: It should not just be the mentor giving advice but also understanding and discussing the mentee's concerns and aspirations.

6. Encourage Personal and Professional Development

- » **Mentors:** Provide guidance on how your mentee can achieve their personal or professional goals, but don't do the work for them. Instead, offer advice, share resources, and suggest opportunities for growth.
- » **Mentees:** Take responsibility for your own development. Follow through on commitments, try new approaches, and seek opportunities for learning.

7. Offer Constructive Feedback

- » **Mentors:** Provide honest, constructive feedback that is actionable and designed to help the mentee grow. Avoid being overly critical or dismissive.
- » **Mentees:** Be open to receiving feedback and be willing to act on it to improve. Accept that constructive criticism is part of growth.

8. Be Accountable

Mentors should encourage mentees to take responsibility for their actions and decisions. Similarly, mentors should also be accountable for the advice and guidance they offer.

Set checkpoints or regular progress reviews to evaluate how the mentee is progressing toward their goals.

9. Foster Independence

While a mentor provides guidance and support, the ultimate goal should be to empower the mentee to make their own decisions and take ownership of their path.

- » **Mentors:** Help your mentee develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and confidence to act independently.
- » **Mentees:** Learn to rely on your own judgment and recognize that the mentor's role is to guide, not to dictate your decisions.

10. Evaluate the Relationship

Periodically, both mentor and mentee should evaluate how the relationship is going. Ask questions like:

- » Are we meeting regularly and productively?
- » Are the mentee's goals being addressed?
- » What's working, and what could be improved?

Adjust the mentoring relationship as needed, whether by changing the meeting frequency, revisiting goals, or modifying the structure.

11. End the Mentorship Gracefully

Mentoring relationships are not meant to last forever. Whether the mentorship has a set time limit or reaches a natural conclusion, ensure that it ends positively. Reflect on the growth and progress made during the mentoring journey, and celebrate accomplishments.

- » **For Mentors:** If the relationship is ending, ensure that the mentee feels empowered to continue their growth independently or seek other mentors for additional guidance.
- » **For Mentees:** Express gratitude for the mentor's time and guidance, and maintain professional or spiritual ties if appropriate.

12. Practice Empathy and Compassion

Mentors should approach mentees with empathy and understanding, especially in areas where the mentee may feel challenged or vulnerable. Mentees should appreciate that mentors are offering their time and experience and should show respect and gratitude for their guidance.

SUMMARY

Effective mentoring is about building a trusting, supportive relationship where the mentor guides the mentee to grow in independence, confidence, and skill. By listening actively, providing constructive feedback, and fostering accountability, both mentors and mentees can experience lasting, transformative growth.

CRISIS PREVENTION GUIDELINES IN MENTORING

Guidelines for a Pastor to Pastor Crisis Prevention Program

1. For Those Being Mentored - (Pastors/Elders/Churches Needing Support)

- » Identify Warning Signs Early: Monitor burnout, relational tension, declining attendance, or moral lapses.
- » Communicate Regularly: Report early challenges to your mentor to address issues before they escalate.
- » Set Personal Boundaries: (This is VERY IMPORTANT) Practice self-care: maintain time for rest, family, and personal prayer.
- » Develop a Crisis Response Plan: Create a plan with clear steps for handling potential crises (e.g., conflicts, scandals, financial problems).
- » Build Support Networks: Engage with trusted leaders and mentors who can help in emergencies.

2. For Mentors - (Experienced Pastors)

- » **Be Proactive, Not Reactive** Regularly check in to help mentees spot potential issues early. Weekly calls and once a month in person, if possible.
- » **Provide Practical Tools:** Share crisis response strategies, conflict resolution steps, and self-care routines.
- » **Offer Emotional and Spiritual Support:** Be a non-judgmental listener, offering prayer and encouragement during tough times.
- » **Guide Toward Professional Help When Needed:** If a crisis exceeds your expertise (e.g., mental health or legal issues), refer to counselors or relevant professionals.
- » **Model Stability and Resilience:** Share how you've navigated crises to provide hope and practical insights.

3. Program Elements for Churches

- » **Establish Clear Communication Channels:** Ensure the pastor knows whom to contact in times of crisis (Mentor, Mentoring Director, board members, etc.).
- » **Promote Preventative Measures:** Encourage regular mentoring, health check-ins, and sabbaticals for pastors. (Sabbatical education needed for churches and pastors)
- » **Prepare a Crisis Management Team:** (Gap Team) Have a small team ready to assist the pastor with immediate support if needed.

These guidelines are practical actions that will help with early intervention as well as help pastors and churches navigate challenges before they become crises.

Crisis Prevention Guidelines in Mentoring

QUICK GUIDE – PASTOR TO PASTOR MENTORING PROGRAM

1. Program Objectives

- » Strengthen pastoral leadership by fostering personal, spiritual, and professional growth.
- » Create a network of support and accountability among pastors.
- » Equip pastors in areas such as conflict resolution, church growth, outreach, and self-care.
- » Encourage healthy relationships between experienced and younger pastors or those in need of guidance.

2. Program Structure (Mentor and Mentee)

- » **Duration:** Establish clear time frames (e.g., 6, 9, or 12 months) with monthly or bi-monthly meetings.
- » **Communication:** In-person, video calls, phone conversations, and emails.
- » **Focus Areas:** Spiritual formation, ministry skills, leadership development, emotional health, and practical church management.

3. Guidelines for Mentees (Pastors/Churches Seeking Mentoring)

» **Prepare Specific Goals**

- Identify the areas of ministry or personal development where help is needed.
- Set measurable outcomes (“Improve conflict management skills” or “Increase member engagement by ___%).

» **Be Open to Learning**

- Approach mentoring with humility and a willingness to receive feedback.
- Reflect regularly on advice given and apply it intentionally.

» **Communicate Transparently**

- Be open about challenges and ministry contexts.
- Maintain consistent contact with your mentor and be punctual for meetings.

» **Maintain Confidentiality**

- Ensure discussions with mentors remain private and focused on growth.
- Handle sensitive issues responsibly and ethically.

4. Guidelines for Mentors (Experienced Pastors)

» **Set Expectations**

- Clarify the scope of mentoring (What you can and cannot help with).
- Ensure both parties agree on frequency, duration, and format of meetings.

» **Practice Active Listening**

- Create space for mentees to express challenges and concerns.
- Ask open-ended questions to help mentees reflect deeply on issues.

» **Offer Encouragement and Accountability**

- Celebrate progress and milestones achieved by mentees.
- Provide accountability on agreed goals without being overbearing. Focus on the process being greater than the goal.

» **Share Experiences, Not Just Solutions**

- Use personal stories and ministry experiences to illustrate principles.
- Focus on empowering mentees to find solutions rather than simply offering advice. Set S.M.A.R.T goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound)

» **Respect Boundaries**

- Avoid trying to “fix” everything for the mentee.
- Understand the unique context of each mentee’s ministry.

5. Church’s Role in Mentoring

» **Support the Pastor**

- Provide resources (time off, finances, etc.) to ensure participation in mentoring.
- Celebrate and encourage the pastor’s growth journey with the mentor.

» **Create a Culture of Learning**

- Promote openness to feedback and development within the church.
- View mentoring as part of the church’s long-term health strategy. (Critical, both for pastor and church)

6. Matching Mentors with Mentees

» **Alignment of Strengths and Needs**

- Match mentors with relevant experience to mentees' areas of need (e.g., experience, ministry, or church leadership). Understand the unique context of each mentee's ministry.

» **Consider Compatibility**

- Look for personal chemistry and shared ministry values.
- Ensure both parties feel comfortable with the match before committing.

7. Evaluation and Feedback

» **Regular Check-ins**

- Assess the mentoring relationship periodically to ensure it is effective.
- Make adjustments if the relationship isn't meeting expectations.

» **End-of-Program Evaluation**

- Collect feedback from both mentors and mentees to improve future mentoring cycles.
- Offer certificates or recognition to participants upon program completion. (Recognizing individual effort is important)

8. Resources and Support Tools

- » Provide recommended reading materials, templates, and self-care resources.
- » Use journals for mentees to document their reflections and progress.
- » Consider hosting retreats or workshops for mentors and mentees to meet in person.



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