



At the **TABLE** with *Keith Anderson*

What spiritual mentoring is and isn't

Spiritual mentoring is purposive, but as a mentor, I don't know what purpose it will fulfill until I listen to both the Spirit and the mentee to discern the direction(s) we will take.

Mentoring has a trajectory, an aim, a target, and a purpose. It is not mindless or soulless meandering but a journey that recognizes itself as a pilgrimage with a spiritual or devotional purpose. The trajectory is not prepackaged. Our spiritual journeys are not given to us complete with road maps, trip outlines, or itineraries, only an invitation to discover what God has in mind for our particular excursion through time and space.

A snapshot of the purposes of several Biblical mentors:

1. Encouragement: the relationship is between Moses and Young Joshua. His successor and leadership to be strong and not to fear what lies ahead: Deuteronomy, 31:7-8.
2. Discernment: Eli instructed Samuel to listen. Because, quote, Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. First Samuel 3:8.
3. Accountability: Nathan confronts King David for his moral failures. 2 Samuel 12 is a text of confrontation and accountability.
4. A reminder of spiritual identity is when Abigail intercepts the young political refugee, David, helping to bring to David's mind the memory of his own God-given purposes (1 Samuel 25).
5. Wisdom-giving for decision-making: Naomi is the wise sage for young Ruth, who carefully follows the instructions of the older woman. Ruth
6. The challenge for political and cultural influence: Mordecai challenges his young niece, Queen Esther, to remember her identity as one of the people of God and thus to rule in "such a time as this."
7. Empowerment: Elijah, the older prophet, empowers Elisha, who will become his successor—II King's 2.
8. Explanation and Correction: Priscilla and Aquila are a married couple without apparent theological education. Nonetheless, they tutored their day's great preacher and teacher, Apollos, on listening to the Holy Spirit (Acts 18).
9. Appeal for growth in living justly: Paul writes to Philemon asking him to accept his runaway slave as a full member of the house church in Philemon's home. This was a challenge to slavery then, as it is to racism, classism, or nationalism today.

Another snapshot—Spiritual mentoring is not:

1. Career counseling—though may ask questions about vocation and call.
2. Psychological counseling—though it may probe the life of the inward psyche of another.
3. Advice giving—though wisdom is the language spoken by mentors.
4. Pastoral counseling—though it may be practiced by pastors gifted for mentoring.
5. Traditional teaching as a way of transmitting information—though it will include instruction times.
6. Discipline, where the goal may be to teach a believer foundational truths and personal mastery of particular theological doctrine or spiritual disciplines.
7. Confession—though the mentor may assist the spiritual seeker in giving voice to their confession to God.

Practice: Based on the two lists above, are there expectations for you as a mentor or mentee that must be re-considered?



Why sign up: If you want to mentor, are already a mentor, or are just curious about the purpose and power of mentoring, then these 30 days are exactly what you need.

What to expect: A quick one-to-three-minute read for 30 days in a row that will include quotes, short videos, encouragement, and free downloads.

Our hope for you: May you come to discover and trust the living Christ in your midst as you enter and serve in the ministry of mentoring conversations.

Sign up today!