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Types of Mentoring Relationships



Mentoring relationships come in different shapes and sizes—not only because the women in them are unique and have particular interests, desires and needs, but also because women have differing possible time commitments. Below are descriptions of some types of relationships. They're not exclusive, but rather exemplary. See if one of these examples approximates the parameters of an intentional relationship you may be entering. Discuss with your partner what might be possible and profitable for the coming season.

Discipleship—A younger woman feels a need for help and guidance in growing in her faith life. When she finds an older friend with whom she feels she connects, they decide to study a part of the Bible together. Weekly or bi-weekly, the two women look together at Scripture and reflect on what God is teaching us or promising us or warning us about, there. Or they use a workbook or other aid to lead their study together. Both are benefitting from the time in God's Word and in conversation about it. They might decide to do this for a period of time, like for the summer or fall, or until they finish the particular study (on, say, the letter to the Galatians). Then they reassess whether to continue meeting.

Prayer Partners—If a younger and older woman link up in friendship or acquaintance and God moves them to meet together, they might decide that the call on the relationship is for intentional sharing and common prayer. Usually, the younger woman especially feels a need for an older friend, one who has some life experience and wisdom to share. But the older woman, too, may open up with her own needs. Perhaps the older woman will lead in the praying, if the younger one is

uncomfortable praying out loud. Or they could simply share prayer requests and pray for one another in private. Often this type of intentional relationship is less prescribed in its meeting times and dates. The women may set up times, or they may reach out to one another regularly as the Spirit leads. The women still might wish to identify a length of time (a year, say) during which they plan to be intentional about praying together.

Spiritual Mother/Daughter—When a younger woman has lost her mother or is estranged from her or lives very far from her, God can provide a spiritual mother in the Body of Christ. This kind of relationship functions similarly to those within healthy biological families: The “daughter” might be invited to meals, asked out on special outings, reached out to by text for fun or checking in. Usually this kind of mentoring happens along the way, organically, and the relationship is considered to be a long-lasting one.

Book Study Partners—In this kind of mentoring relationship, the older woman might choose a book that she feels would benefit the younger woman in her stage of life, and they read and talk about it regularly together. For instance, they might read [The Gospel-Centered Life](#) together, if clarity about our faith and how it applies to our lives is called for. Or, if the younger woman is awash in diapers and school papers, then [Praying the Scripture for Your Children](#) might offer a helpful study. [The Five Love Languages](#) is a great study for anyone, and [For the Love](#) is super light and funny but includes pointers in a life of faith. A book study, like the discipleship model above, is best done on a very regular basis.