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A Relational Mentoring Model



by Dr. Dene Wood,
AGTS Visiting
Professor of Missions
and Education

At strategic stages in one's spiritual journey, a growing leader needs empowering relationships—mentors, peers, emerging leaders and the companionship of the Holy Spirit—to facilitate desired growth, ensure a healthy perspective on life and ministry, and make sure the journey ends well. Several types of mentoring are necessary for growth.

Upward Mentoring reflects our need for someone who has traveled before us. It can give direction and perspective, and can provide wisdom and encouragement to persevere. For example, Barnabas mentored Paul.

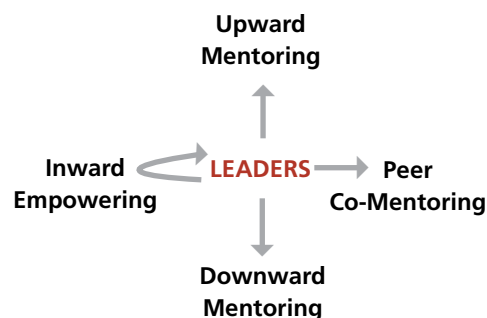
Downward Mentoring reflects our need for spiritual generativity—helping to develop the capacity, commitment and values that enable the next generation to serve God faithfully. Paul mentored Timothy.

Peer Co-Mentoring reflects our need for those who know us, share common experiences with us and with whom we can provide mutual stimulation,

encouragement and personal accountability. Note that Paul and Titus were peer co-mentors.

Inward Empowering reflects our need for the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, who is with us 24/7. He teaches; guides in our journey toward Christlikeness; and encourages, anoints and empowers us. He keeps us from wrong thinking and wrong living. The Holy Spirit was Paul's constant companion.

Adapted from P.D. Stanley and J.R. Clinton. Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1992.



Building a Team-Based Ministry

by Paul F. Martinez
(D.Min. 2004),
AGTS Director of
Development

“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17, NIV). Throughout the Bible, relationships are the most essential facet of both humanity and deity. They are at the heart of the biblical revelation of God to man.

Leadership in the ministry is complex and multi-faceted. A minister working alone can face discouragement and self-doubt stemming from isolation. In their book, *The Wisdom of Teams*, Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas Smith state, “A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.”

Jesus set an example as he built a community of disciples who affected change in the entire Greco-Roman world. By forging relationships with key disciples, Jesus mentored and empowered them to accomplish significant tasks.

Patrick Lencioni, in *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, notes that teams face challenges such as lack of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability and inattention to results. However, a ministry team can overcome those challenges and function effectively if it



understands the team is more than a group of individuals working together.

Teams often go through several stages, commonly known as the forming, storming, norming and performing stages. When forming, teams are excited about the possibilities ahead. In the storming stage, expectations are often found to be different than reality—this is typically a critical stage where dysfunctions must be addressed. When norming occurs, teams persevere through the storms to accomplish their goals. In the performing stage, the team realizes that it is greater than the sum of its individual parts and it can serve more effectively as a team than as individuals working separately. By focusing our efforts, we can build teams to lead healthy, effective ministry in the kingdom of God.

Responding to Conflict



*by Lori O'Dea
(D.Min. 2002),
Teaching and Small
Groups Pastor at The
Oaks Fellowship, Red
Oak, Texas,
AGTS Adjunct
Faculty Member*

“Conflict you will have with you always,” a paraphrase of Jesus’ teaching states. Pastors know that conflict inhabits even the healthiest churches. They know it can strengthen the organization. Generally, however, conflict is viewed as an armed and dangerous intruder.

Such was the case for Nehemiah. Faced with the daunting task of rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls, he and his people banded together to overcome outside enemies. The conflict within, however, presented the greatest challenge. Nehemiah’s model of response and resolution offers timeless wisdom for today’s leader.

1. **Listen carefully** (Neh. 5:1-5). No doubt tempted to keep their attention on the mission-critical task at hand, Nehemiah nonetheless hears his people’s complaints. He understood that conflict cannot be ignored.

2. **Take time to process** (6-7a). Scripture honestly records Nehemiah’s first response—blazing, albeit righteous, anger. Rather than acting immediately, and perhaps understanding the New Testament principle of “be angry and

sin not” (Eph. 4:26), he took time to ponder the situation.

3. **Confront the wrong** (Neh. 7b-9a). When something is wrong, the leader cannot condone, overlook or forget it. It may be easier to confront an enemy than one’s people, but the pastor realizes that the latter is especially important.

4. **Call to a higher level** (9b). Nehemiah helps his people understand the impetus for correct behavior. He reminds them that right behavior flows out of a desire to please God and represent him well.

5. **Model right behavior** (10). Nehemiah’s actions illustrate how his people should act toward one another. Difficult times require a strong, not conflicted, community.

6. **Encourage restitution** (11-13). Giving clear instructions, calling for both commitment and accountability, and illustrating the consequences of disobedience, Nehemiah brings wise and timely resolution to a potentially destructive conflict.

Verbal assent matures into action, and purpose again comes to the forefront—a desirable and achievable outcome!