

Mentoring for Recognised Pastors

Mentoring provides an ongoing relationship of support, accountability, and encouragement. Recognised Pastors are required to have a mentor as part of their commitment to their ongoing development. Mentors will work with the Recognised Pastor to engage with their Personal Learning Plan (PLP) over a two-year period.

Mentoring overlaps with but is not synonymous with pastoral care, counselling, coaching, and supervision. At its heart it is about discipling in both Christian faith and pastoral leadership. Meeting with a mentor has been likened to visiting a GP for a check-up. Mentors are encouraged to monitor the health of the Recognised Pastor's relationship with God; relationships with key family members and ministry colleagues; emotional health; and potential vulnerabilities.

Using the PLP, the Recognised Pastor will reflect with their mentor on their ongoing ministry practice and development, in particular regarding identified strengths and growth areas. Ministry practice flows from one's own spiritual formation and character development, and so these two foundational areas should also be significant parts of the mentoring conversation. Recognised Pastors and their mentors will meet at least four times per year, for at least 60-90 minutes, in a time and place set aside to focus specifically on these things.

How does mentoring work?

The practice of mentoring is based on relationships of trust. It is vital therefore that the matters discussed and disclosed by mentors and mentees in their meetings are treated with confidentiality. There needs to be the freedom and safety to explore any issues that arise.

Mentoring should be theologically reflective, so that Recognised Pastors can explore what they are learning about God, about ministry, and about themselves; and spiritually rich, acknowledging that the mentor and mentee meet together in the presence of God and are open to the work of the Holy Spirit in each of them.

What should mentoring meetings look like in practice?

Recognised Pastors and their mentor should set aside a time to meet in a place that is conducive to confidential and intentional conversation without interruption.

Mentors will usually ask questions about the previous three-month period, such as what has been going well, what significant things have occurred, and what difficulties have been encountered. Mentors will also explore questions specific to the PLP, including what has been the main focus in the previous three months, what has been learned, how God has been at work, what strengths and growth areas are emerging, and how the Recognised Pastor is maintaining and growing in their relationship with Jesus.

Mentors will also encourage the Recognised Pastor to look forward to the next three-month period, considering what they are hoping to learn, experience, and reflect on and if there are specific questions that should be asked next time they meet. It is important to review what insights or challenges will be taken away from the mentoring meeting, and how the mentor can continue to support and pray for the Recognised Pastor, before drawing to a close and confirming the next meeting date.

Who can be a PLP mentor?

The mentor should be someone with significant pastoral/ministry experience who can help the Recognised Pastor reflect on their spiritual formation, character development, and ministry practice. The mentor could be a BCSA Accredited Pastor, a pastor in another denomination, or another suitably trusted person approved by the Director of Ministry Accreditation. It is preferable that the mentor not be a ministry colleague in the Recognised Pastor's own church context.

What qualities should I look for in a PLP mentor?

- A deep personal faith and commitment to regularly pray for the Recognised Pastor
- A genuine commitment to the personal and professional development of the Recognised Pastor
- A willingness to speak honestly and ask difficult questions of the Recognised Pastor
- An understanding of the PLP process and requirements
- A preparedness to make a long-term commitment to the Recognised Pastor and their ongoing development
- An understanding of and commitment to local church ministry
- An understanding of the principles of accountability and confidentiality