

Would it Help to Have a Mentor?

'Trying to live out my faith at work, with colleagues and patients is challenging!'

'I've just moved to a new city and have started this hectic rotation but know no one and would really benefit from sharing about my situation.'

'It would be a real encouragement to have another Christian Doctor/Healthcare Professional to walk alongside and pray with.'

'Even though I'm attending a great church, I feel isolated as I don't feel that I can share openly my work-life balance-related challenges.'

'I would love to share my faith more at work...it would be great to bounce ideas and pray with another Christian Doctor in the same situation.'

Have you ever had thoughts like these or been in similar situations? if so then continue reading.....



As soon as we leave university, leaving the peer or CU support we have had and embark on our working lives, we suddenly find less time, increased responsibility on our shoulders and a steep learning curve. Some of us may move to new cities where we do not have an established support network and our shift pattern may mean that we cannot attend church on Sunday's or midweek meetings as we previously used to. Irregular working hours make it difficult to engage with people in church, who whilst well meaning do not understand fully the pressures specific to Medicine.

Even if we have been working for a number of years, there are always hurdles and challenges which appear in front of us, ranging from training and exams to difficult ethical situations and dealing with complaints and ultimately perhaps even planning for retirement.

Christian Healthcare Mentoring



Rates of stress and burnout are high and stories of being disillusioned with working within the NHS are not uncommon. Whilst listening to Churches/sermons on line can be helpful, it is not a substitute for fellowship. And even home groups do not always provide the support we desire or need. As Doctors, we may find it difficult to share scenarios and challenges pertaining to medicine for various reasons such as maintaining confidentiality and an understandable lack of understanding from non medics.

As a Christian, encouragement from another can help us to continue growing in the Lord and to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. It can be invaluable to have a space in which we can raise and evaluate challenges that we face in our daily working lives and be helped to grow in our relationship with Jesus and also shine for Christ at work amongst our colleagues and patients. Praying with and being prayed for

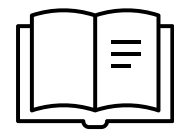


by another Christian healthcare colleague and being aware of Gods hand on our lives can serve to strengthen us in our daily challenges and help us to seek to know him more and to live in the Lords will, doing the good works that he has prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph1. 17-18, Eph 2. 10)

If this rings true with you, have you considered seeking a mentor? Not necessarily because you are having a 'problem' or a particular concern or that you are a new Christian, but because you recognise the benefit of having someone to walk along side, encouraging, gently probing and encouraging you to share what's on your heart and maybe even challenge you to step outside of your comfort zone in your faith and trust the Lord more completely. Meeting regularly with a mentor to evaluate, share encouragement from the scriptures and pray can help in this.

Biblical Basis for Mentoring

What does the Bible have to say about mentoring? Well, there is no shortage of scriptures instructing us to encourage one another. (Eg. 1 Thes 4. 18, 1 Thes 5.11, Heb 10. 24, Heb 3. 13.) This means not just that we should encourage but that we need to be on the receiving end of encouragement at times! In fact, the purpose of Scripture itself is to teach us endurance and provide encouragement and hope.



((Rom 15. 4); and ultimately it is God who gives endurance and encouragement (Rom 15. 5) and that this can be in the form of encouragement from other Christians.

It is in the times of difficulty such as when persecution breaks out in the early church that Paul sends Barnabas to encourage the Christians to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts (Acts 11 22-23) . He also sends Timothy to strengthen and encourage the Thessalonians in their faith during their trials. (1Thes.3 .2) and Tychicus to the Ephesians (Eph 6. 22) and also to the Colossians (Col.4. 8)

We see after Jesus died the two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus talking together trying to make sense of the events of the preceding days just before Jesus walks with them and helps them understand. (Luke 24. 13-32)

Mordecai acts as a sort of mentor to his cousin Esther, encouraging her to seek to become Queen and during a time of great trial to speak out for her people, reminding her that she may be placed there 'for such a time as this.' (Esther 4. 14)

Naomi is a sort of mentor to her daughter in law, Ruth when she sees Ruth is desperate to stay with her and to return to her land and make Naomi people her people and her God, also her God Ruth's God. (See the book of Ruth for the full story!)

Barnabas was named so as the name means 'son of encouragement'. He is described as a 'good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith' (Acts 11. 24), who is an example of the sort of person to seek as a mentor.

How can CMF Help with Mentoring?

If you have a local CMF Catalyst group, you can approach the team leader and ask if there is a Pastoral Care catalyst'. They will be able to advise or connect you with someone. If this is not possible, please contact the CMF office via the email wellbeing@cmf.org.uk and we will get back in touch with you.

Mentoring comes under the auspices of the CMF Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Programme and is provided by CMF Pastoral Partners. Pastoral Partners (PP's) are Christian Doctors and healthcare Professionals who have undergone CMF accreditation and training and who have an interest in mentoring and pastoral care. PP's are appointed through a careful application process, are DBS checked and are trained in generic pastoral skills including confidentiality and listening. All CMF wellbeing activity is governed by the Pastoral Care Code of Practice which is available for review. This is to ensure what we do is safe.

We ask people who would like a mentor to complete a simple form. This asks for some basic information to help match you with the most appropriate mentor for you.

Mentoring meetings will usually be online although where possible face to face meetings can be helpful.

The exact nature of a mentoring relationship is very individual, for some only a few meetings are required, whilst for others it may continue for a few years or more. We recommend that the situation is reviewed mutually at least every 6 months.

The format of your meetings is very variable and is largely driven by your needs. Some may be very informal whereas some are more formal targeting a particular need at that time. Some choose to meet to discuss what's happening just now and pray about these events, whilst others may read a book for discussion together, study a book of the Bible or even have an annual 'spiritual appraisal.'

As a minimum we recommend that you have telephone contact with your mentor once a month and an online or face to face meeting once a term.

So....

Whatever your situation, may we encourage you to prayerfully consider if seeking a mentor is right for you and pray that you will encounter the person the Lord has prepared for you.

If you would like to take things forward with CMF just let us know at wellbeing@cmf.org.uk using the subject heading "***Applying for a mentor***". We will send you an application form.