

Getting Ready for Mentoring

We hope that you will find your mentoring relationship to be a great source of encouragement, support, and personal growth over the next weeks and months. As you begin a mentoring relationship, there are things you can do to get the mentoring relationship off to a positive start. We suggest you do the following before or during your first few mentoring meetings.

1. Think about learning goals. Mentoring should be a relationship which enables you to grow and learn. If you can give your mentor some ideas about how you want to grow, he/she will be more able to tailor your mentoring sessions to your needs. Your mentor should have already received a copy of the learning contract or reflection paper that you completed at the Cross-Cultural Ministry Internship (previously Pre-Field Training), but take some time to review the document and clarify any questions your mentor might have.

The following questions may help you think through learning goals you want to work on:

- What kind of person do you want to become?
- What new cultural skills will you need to minister effectively in your new context?
- How do you want to grow in your ability to relate well to friends? family? co-workers? nationals?
- What new knowledge do you need to serve effectively in your context?

2. Have realistic expectations. Remember that your mentor is only human. He or she probably already has a full schedule with many demands on his/her time. Your mentor may not have as much time and energy to invest in mentoring as you would like.

It may be impossible for your mentor to single-handedly fulfill and address all of the personal, spiritual, and ministry issues you are facing. While your

mentor will probably provide excellent help for many of your learning goals, your mentor may refer you to someone else who may be better prepared to handle a particular issue you are facing.

3. Optimize communication. Make appointments. Be on time. Come prepared. Be efficient and organized. If you need to cancel a mentoring appointment, try to do so in person or on the phone rather than sending an e-mail message.

If you sense a conflict arising, communicate directly (face to face is best) to work through the issue. Because e-mail is one-dimensional, even dealing with mild disagreements via e-mail can be counter productive.

4. Respect boundaries. Although friendships may develop in many mentoring relationships, it is not necessary. Your mentor may already have a busy ministry and social schedule and may not have much extra time or energy for more friendships.

5. Work as hard (or harder) than you mentor. Most people find that they get as much out of mentoring as they put into it. If you take the time and effort to listen carefully to your mentor, take the steps he or she suggests, and ask for help and advice when you need it, you will get a great deal out of the mentoring relationship.

God bless you as you begin the exciting journey of mentoring. If we can help you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us at mentoring@mtw.org.