

Forming a Covenant

A covenant acts as a map for your work together. It sets the directions, boundaries, and objectives of this mentoring relationship. The formality of writing and signing a covenant expresses the sacred commitment you are making. The formal covenant fashioned for the mentoring process reflects the fact that the mentor and mentee share a sense of call, vocation, discipline, and authority.

1. Reflect with one another on one or two biblical covenants. What are the elements of the covenant? What does each party expect from each other? What does each party offer the other?
2. Discuss these basic issues of covenant formation.
 - How can we build trust and honor boundaries?
 - How can we make sure that sharing the journey of ministry remains more important than fixing specific problems?
 - When necessary, how can the mentor “speak the truth in love” regarding effectiveness in ministry in such a way that the mentee is empowered to face the issues head on? There may be instances in which it becomes clear that pursuing ordained ministry is not in the mentee’s best interest. In such cases, the mentor should carefully confront the mentee to explore again his or her call and gifts so as to steer the mentee toward an appropriate expression of ministry.
 - If either or both of us no longer feel safe because our willingness to be vulnerable had been betrayed, how can we end the relationship in a respectful manner?
3. Consider these specific details for inclusion in your covenant.
 - Overall plan for your journey
 - Frequency and length of meetings, dates, times, and places
 - Attendance expectations
 - Preparation, content, and follow-up for mentoring sessions
 - Report process
 - Expectations of confidentiality
 - Who takes initiative
 - Leadership roles and responsibilities
 - Expectations of written work (theological-biblical reflection)
 - Learning goals (for persons enrolled in the Course of Study, the curriculum is part of the focus), resources to be used (materials, persons, events)
 - Authority/Accountability

- Involvement of laypeople in the mentoring process

Closing Statement

We, the undersigned, enter into a covenantal relationship and commit ourselves to fulfill the details of the covenant given above. It is our hope and prayer that in this process of sharing and mentoring we will learn from each other. We make this covenant in the name of Jesus Christ. *(The mentor and mentee should each retain a copy of the covenant.)*

Mentor_____

Mentee_____

Date_____

Creating Sacred Time Together

CANDIDACY MENTORS

The CANDIDACY mentor and mentee will intentionally move through the ***Answering God's Call: Guidelines for Candidacy***. This resource offers a directed approach toward conversations around discernment of call, vocation, spiritual readiness and fitness for ordained ministry.

CLERGY MENTORS

The CLERGY mentor and mentee will have a less structured resource. Therefore, the following information might be helpful. When the mentor and mentee meet, they are sharing sacred time. Therefore, these sessions should be planned carefully and approached prayerfully. Remember that, in addition to the usual greetings and conversation, the purpose of the session is to engage in theological reflection upon a specific topic.

Suggested topics include:

- ***Ministry event*** - a conversation, phone call, meeting, worship service, prayer experience
- ***Life event*** - a personal experience outside of the mentee's clergy role
- ***Shared experience*** - this may include times of joint participation in a variety of settings, i.e., a retreat, continuing education event, book study, movie
- ***Site Visit*** - to each other's ministry settings
- ***Course of Study Work*** - For those licensed as local pastors and working through the Course of Study, there may be times that a mentor's review of course work is required. Even if not, helping navigate the rhythms of the particular Course of Study attending, reading and writing papers is essential work for your mentee. For some without higher levels of education, this can be particularly daunting and guidance would be welcome.

Reflection Process

- Pose appropriate questions, such as:
 - How well did you identify and respond to the needs of the person(s) involved?
 - Were you able to listen and hear what was said both verbally and nonverbally?
 - Can you explain why you did what you did?
 - What did you learn about your own pastoral identity and authority?
 - How did you find yourself reacting on rational and emotional levels?
 - How did your identity (culture, gender, race, ethnicity, class) affect this event?
 - What faith issues were involved in this event, both for you and for the other person(s)?
 - In what ways did you witness to your understanding of the gospel?
 - What use did you make of scripture, tradition, reason and experience?
 - How was God revealed in this event, both for you and the other person(s)?
 - How does this ministry relate to your theological understanding of ministry?
 - In what ways is/was God's presence and activity evident in this event?

Closing Sacred Time

Before ending the time together as mentor/mentee, share with each other how you have experienced the session. Affirm each other, acknowledge unfinished business, confirm the next meeting time, and pray for each other.

CONSIDERATIONS AND NOTES FOR MENTORS

- It is a sacred trust that we are given as mentors, DCOM members and BOM members to help a candidate discern their call to ministry. Know that all of us take this very seriously.
- During this time of discernment, encourage your candidate to take the time they need. Yes, a “clock starts ticking” at the certification level (12 years maximum of certification), but the goal is not to get through the process as quickly as possible, but to allow the time for growth, development and discernment.
- As a mentor, you should know as much as possible about the different tracks of ministry (local pastor, deacon, elder) and the paths to each. The process changes and shifts with General Conference action, so keep informed, that you can help your mentee as best as possible. Also be aware of other avenues to ministry (Lay Servant, Certified Lay Minister), and help the candidate understand all the options. Be familiar with the educational and other requirements associated with each track to ministry.
- Be aware of your candidate’s timing in the process—they must be certified for at least a year (and listed in the BAC, “Business of the Annual Conference”, at least one time) prior to being eligible for commissioning by the BOM. This year of certification *may* be concurrent with completing commissioning paperwork, but that timeline is not guaranteed and the best course of action is determined by the DCOM.
- It is crucial to be realistic with candidates about challenges along the way. Family and other issues play heavily into the discernment process.
- Not all people are called or suited for licensed or ordained ministry. Be ready for responses that are “no” or “not yet”. What are the next steps with your candidate from this point? The process in learning to navigate the “no’s” requires grace and prayer.
- The mentor’s main goals are to be present with the candidate during the process, to minimize the difficulties that sometimes arise with the process and to offer a non-evaluative support.

