A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF WOMEN’S ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN MENTORING OTHER WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This qualitative phenomenological study explores the attitudes and views of women towards mentoring other women in the church for discipleship purposes. Although there are many benefits to women entering into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes, including spiritual growth, increase in the practice of spiritual disciplines, staying grounded in the Christian faith, and experiencing deeper intimacy with Christ, there is still a significant percentage of women who are not doing so. The researcher surveyed 37 Christian women between the ages of 18 and 65 to explore their attitudes and views towards women mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes. All participants viewed mentoring amongst women for discipleship purposes with a positive attitude, whether they had been mentored previously in this capacity or not. Most participants believed having a mentor would be a great source of encouragement and would provide guidance and accountability in their discipleship process. The research found that there are barriers to women entering into a mentoring relationship in the church for discipleship purposes. These barriers give insight into reasons why a significant percentage of women are not entering into mentoring relationships in the church for discipleship purposes. Identifying these barriers is the first step to determining how to assist women in overcoming these barriers so that there can be an increase in discipleship through mentoring relationships in the church.

Keywords: mentoring, women mentors, discipleship, mentee, leadership, church, barriers
Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral research project to my grandmother. She is the first mentor I ever had. She raised my sister and me and was the first person to teach us about Christ. We would go to church weekly, read Scripture, and sing worship songs together. The greatest impact, though, came from watching her live out her faith. The nights she stayed up praying for me when I was sick, anointing me with oil and calling on the Lord to intervene, will forever be engrained in my mind. She would rise early every day to begin her day with prayer and worship, and she ended her day the same way every day. She still does this today, and I have learned from watching her, how to suffer with grace and to hold on to Christ no matter what may come. She passed on her love for books and education to me, and this is the reason I love learning and studying so much. This shaped me to be a life-long learner and influenced my pursuit of a doctorate degree. Generations will be impacted because of the woman of God my grandmother is and the time she invested into my spiritual growth and development.
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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................ iv
DEDICATION ..................................................................................................................................... v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .................................................................................................................. vi
FIGURES ............................................................................................................................................. x

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................... 1
Ministry Context .................................................................................................................................. 1
Problem Presented ............................................................................................................................... 3
Purpose Statement ............................................................................................................................... 4
Basic Assumptions ................................................................................................................................ 7
Definitions ............................................................................................................................................ 8
Statement of Delimitations .................................................................................................................. 9
Thesis Statement .................................................................................................................................. 9
Summary .............................................................................................................................................. 9

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .......................................................................... 11
Literature Review ............................................................................................................................... 12
   Women Mentoring Women ......................................................................................................... 17
   Gender Biases .............................................................................................................................. 18
   Leadership Development .............................................................................................................. 19
   Cross Gender Mentoring ........................................................................................................... 23
   Generational Differences ............................................................................................................ 24
   Low Self Esteem and Feelings of Inadequacy ......................................................................... 25
   Work-Home Life Balance .......................................................................................................... 26
   Theological Foundations ............................................................................................................. 27
   Theoretical Foundations ............................................................................................................. 38
Summary ............................................................................................................................................ 41

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................. 42
Intervention Design ............................................................................................................................ 42
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Demographic Information

Gender of Respondents
Age of Respondents
Marital Status
Daily Activity
Education Level
Church Denomination

Mentoring Relationship Experience

General Attitudes and Views Towards Mentoring

Positive View
Guidance and Growth
Dealing with Challenges

Overall Impact of Mentoring on Discipleship

Role-Modeling
Encouragement

Challenging and Asking Questions

Barriers to Mentoring

Fear of Intimacy and Vulnerability
Inability to Trust
Feelings of Shame
FIGURES

Figure 1: Gender of Respondents 59
Figure 2: Age of Respondents 60
Figure 3: Marital Status of Respondents 61
Figure 4: Daily Activity of Respondents 62
Figure 5: Highest Level of Education of Respondents 63
Figure 6: Church Denomination of Respondents 64
Figure 7: Mentoring Experience of Respondents 65
Figure 8: Mentor Gender Preference of Mentored Respondents 66
Figure 9: Mentor Gender Preference of Non-Mentored Respondents 67
Figure 10: Respondents Who Were Mentored: Mentored Others or Not 76
Figure 11: Respondents Who Were Not Mentored: Mentored Others or Not 77
Figure 12: Respondents Who Were Mentored: Willingness to Mentor Others or Not 78
Figure 13: Respondents Who Were Mentored: Gender Preference of Potential Mentee 79
Figure 14: Respondents Who Were Not Mentored: Willingness to Mentor Others or Not 80
Figure 15: Respondents Who Were Not Mentored: Gender Preference of Potential Mentee 81
Figure 16: Recommendation for Mentoring from Mentored Respondents 83
Figure 17: Recommendation for Mentoring from Mentored Respondents 84
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ministry Context

Discipleship is an important aspect of Christianity. It ensures the spread of Christianity, and it is the process in which believers learn how to follow Christ and reflect His image in the world. In order to be discipled, one must have someone to follow. Within Christianity, the person to follow is Jesus.

The church has been called to follow Jesus’ example and make disciples of all nations. Its primary goal is not to mount programs, fill pews, or construct buildings, although each of these may be a legitimate outgrowth of fulfilling its mission. The church’s primary goal is to lead people into a lifestyle of full commitment to Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19). Jesus’ example provides us with a model in this general respect: It is a relational approach. When it comes to the challenge of making disciples in the twenty-first century, it must still be done the old-fashioned way. Disciple making is not a matter of programs but of people. It still takes a disciple to make a disciple.¹

While on earth, Jesus selected twelve individuals to become His disciples so He could reproduce Himself through them. Jesus knew He was not going to be on the earth for very long, and He wanted to impart important principles and truths they would need to know to continue His ministry, and He wanted to show them how to live according to God’s Word. He also wanted to entrust the continuation of His ministry to others so they could share the gospel and show others how to become His disciples. What Jesus did was provide an example for the disciples to follow and this served as a form of mentoring.

The example Jesus provided for the disciples while on earth allowed them to garner life lessons and principles from Him. It also allowed them to experience God walking with them, loving them, and relating to them. After Jesus resurrected from the dead and before He ascended to

heaven, He provided His disciples with instructions on how to continue carrying out His mission. This mission is still being carried out today.

The inspiration to conduct this research project stems from the fact that this researcher has been fortunate to have had various mentoring relationships throughout different life stages, and these experiences have shaped who she is as a person and in Christ. She grew up in a Christian home and was raised by her grandmother, who was her first example of a godly woman. The influence of her grandmother was foundational to the researcher’s relationship with Christ. Her grandmother prayed for her and with her and modeled how to put her faith in Christ. The researcher’s grandmother was the first person to take her to church. The researcher attended the same church until she went to college and found a church closer to school.

Growing up, the researcher had other older godly women in her life that mentored her formally and informally, and she is currently still being mentored for discipleship purposes. It was through relationships with these women that the researcher learned how to follow Christ, treat others, love well, read and study the Bible, pray, fast, depend on God, and understand many other principles that were foundational to her spiritual growth. It is for this very reason that she developed a love for mentoring and discipleship and “paying it forward.” She wanted to give to others what was given to her. This researcher felt blessed that so many godly women had poured into her over the years, especially since many other women she knew lacked godly women in their lives.

This researcher began mentoring other women on campus in graduate school while she was in seminary as part of her internship requirement. She mentored women one on one and in small groups. The fruit that came from these relationships and the discipleship that occurred in the process were invaluable. From that time on, women in local church assemblies have sought the researcher out for mentoring. The women who were mentored then referred other women to be
mentored by the researcher. What surprised this researcher is that she did not inform these women she did mentoring, they sought her out based on observing her character and how she walked with Christ. The researcher was not able to mentor everyone who would like to have been mentored because her time was limited, and mentoring requires ample time to build a relationship and to see transformation. There were also women that she had to decline to mentor because they were not a good fit. The researcher wanted to refer these women to other female mentors in the church, but there was a shortage of women willing or able to mentor them. The researcher was concerned because she knew the importance of mentoring and discipleship.

As a result of this shortage of female mentors, the researcher wanted to be intentional about encouraging and empowering women to mentor other women in the church for discipleship purposes. The researcher began to take an interest in attempting to understand how women in the church view mentoring and whether they experienced any obstacles to being mentored or to mentoring other women in the church for the purpose of discipleship.

**Problem Presented**

When Jesus gave the command to his disciples to make disciples in Matthew 28, it was with the intent that all disciples of Jesus throughout time will make disciples. “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20 NIV). This command is for male and female disciples to obey. Jesus’ example for the disciples to follow during his three years of ministry on this earth acted as a form of mentoring. This allowed the disciples to glean truths and principles from Jesus

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2 Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2011.
and sit under his teaching. They did life together, and the disciples grew over time as a result.

Mentoring is a critical part of discipleship as it allows for individuals to have a role-model in their spiritual development process. Paul states, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Mentoring is so important that Paul gives instruction in the book of Titus for older men to teach the younger men and older women to teach the younger women (Titus 2:1-8).

Mentoring within the church today is not a popular means of doing discipleship. According to research conducted by the Barna Group in 2015, having a spiritual mentor is not at the top of the list when it comes to preferred ways of being discipled. They conducted a study on the preferred types of discipleship activities amongst those who say spiritual growth is somewhat important to them. The research showed that 43 percent of practicing Christians attend Sunday school or a fellowship group, 33 percent study the Bible with a group, 25 percent read and discuss a Christian book with a group, and only 17 percent have a spiritual mentor. This number is low especially given that this is one of the central methods Jesus used to make disciples while on earth.³

More than that, mentoring was, and still is, one of God’s chosen methods for accomplishing his plans on earth. It is foreshadowed in Deuteronomy 6 in the instructions given to parents for raising their children. We have records of it taking place a number of times in the Old Testament (besides Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha are another excellent example). It is the method Jesus used and modeled for us during His earthly ministry. It is the method God’s Word repeatedly calls us to in the New Testament.⁴

**Purpose Statement**

Although mentoring is low amongst men and women within the church, as evidenced in the research conducted by Barna Group, this thesis project will focus on mentoring women within the

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church for the purpose of discipleship. It will explore the attitudes and views women have towards entering into mentoring relationships with one another in the church, identifying perceived or real barriers women may have towards entering into this type of relationship. It can often be a challenge for a woman to find another woman to join her in a mentoring relationship. Sophie Hudson observes:

> Over the last few years of writing and speaking, I’ve heard a significant number of stories from women who long to be mentored and can’t find a single person in their community/church/workplace willing to step into that role. My heart absolutely goes out to folks who crave the guidance and care of an older woman; not being able to find it has to be discouraging and disconcerting and a whole bunch of other dis-words.⁵

Most churches have more women in attendance than men, so it is puzzling as to why there are not more women involved in this type of ministry. “From very early days, American surveys conducted by Gallup Poll often included items on religion and invariably found that women were more likely than men to belong to and attend church, to pray, to say religion was a very important part of their lives, to read the Bible, and to believe in life after death.”⁶ Although this is the case, many women are struggling with what it looks like to follow Christ and be a godly woman. Many women who are believers may not have been raised in Christian households and may not have an example of what it looks like to live out their daily lives as Christians. Even women who grew up in Christian homes may not have had the best example of how to live a godly life. Learning how to be a godly woman, wife, or mother can be a challenge for many women. Who better to help these

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women than other Christian women who are more mature than they and can walk alongside them through the process of becoming more like Christ in their daily lives?7

As women are maturing in their Christian faith, they need someone to disciple them and teach them how to follow and obey Christ and deal with the unique challenges’ women face.

As I write and minister, it becomes more evident to me that Christian women want to participate in the work of God in their churches, and they want authentic mentoring that will challenge their growth in Christ and their relationships with others. I rejoice with the women who have rewarding mentoring relationships, and my heart breaks for those who are still searching but have no one to mentor them.8

The Christian walk is not easy, and a lot of what is learned is through observing others and following the example of more mature Christians. This is why women mentoring other women in the discipleship process is important. Women must be encouraged to use their gifts and to help one another grow in Christ. All members of the body of Christ, including women, must use their gifts and make disciples in order for the body to remain healthy and continue to grow (1 Corinthians 12:21-26).

Ephesians 4:11-12 tells us that gifted people are given to the church to prepare God’s people for works of service. Therefore, women are to be prepared and are to prepare others for service. Titus2:3-5 teaches us clearly that the leadership of the church is to delegate to older, spiritually mature women the task of teaching and training the younger women in some specific ways.9

Exploring women’s viewpoints on mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes and identifying what may be hindering them from doing this will provide a platform in

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which women can then be empowered to overcome these hindrances and begin mentoring other women in the discipleship process.

**Basic Assumptions**

This researcher holds that there are many women not being discipled in the church. She assumes that an effective way to increase discipleship amongst women within the church is for women to engage in mentoring relationships with one another. As indicated in the statement below, there is a lack of this type of mentoring being offered and utilized within the church. Thomas concludes,

A number of churches and para churches have women’s ministries or a designated women’s day once a year. These ministries are mostly geared toward women in a general manner within the congregation, regardless of their socioeconomic background, marital status, or age. A holistic women’s ministry should be designed to train female mentors in spiritual growth and maturity, personal relationships, have the ability to model how to relate and connect with the future generations and attempt to evangelize those who… have not accepted Jesus. For the younger generation of women who have accepted Jesus, the mentor will leave an influential spiritual map on how to maneuver through the toils and snares of this life, and become the salt and light in a dark world.¹⁰

This researcher presupposes that women are not entering into mentoring relationships within the church because there are obstacles to doing so, and if these obstacles were removed or reduced, then more women would engage in them. The researcher assumed that surveying women congregants of various ages and different church denominations on their view towards mentoring one another would provide insight into the reason(s) why women in the church may not be entering into this type of relationship with one another despite the many benefits.

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Definitions

For the purpose of this thesis project, the term mentoring is being defined as a process in which a person who is more knowledgeable and experienced in a specific subject matter partners and shares with another person to train, teach, guide, advise and support him or her in personal, and spiritual development. “Mentoring can therefore be seen as a developmental process which can occur both naturally and officially, to allow an individual to share his or her experience, knowledge and skills with another individual in order to benefit (mostly) the latter’s personal and/or professional development.”¹¹ Christian mentoring adds to it a spiritual development component and the inclusion of one’s faith in the mentoring process. Brian Wakeman states:

One key purpose of Christian mentoring might be to help people acquire the knowledge and skills to fulfill God’s creation purposes for human beings to ‘have dominion’, ‘to work and take care of the planet’. Whether it is business management, nursing, teaching, or any other profession, trade, or role, mentoring can help people acquire the expertise to perform well, to serve the human race, and to create work and prosperity. This is one aspect of general Christian mentoring in wider dimensions of life.¹²

The term discipleship is being used to describe the spiritual process of developing a relationship with Christ by learning of Him and His teachings and learning to follow and obey Him in all His commands. One cannot truly be a Christian without being a disciple of Christ because it is following Christ that makes one a Christian, not simply calling oneself a Christian by religious affiliation. Hull states,

With an abstract idea it is possible to enter into a relation of formal knowledge, to become enthusiastic about it, and perhaps even to put it into practice; but it can never be followed in personal obedience. Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ. It remains an abstract idea, a myth that has a place for the Fatherhood of God, but omits Christ


as the living Son. A Christianity of that kind is nothing more or less than the end of discipleship.  

 Statement of Delimitations  

This research project seeks to explore the attitudes and views of women in the church regarding entering into a mentoring relationship with other women in the church. It will not focus on women mentoring one another outside of the discipleship process. Mentoring can occur without a spiritual aspect, but this is not the type of mentoring that this project will be dealing with. Lastly, since this project focuses solely on women, the research findings may not be applicable to the attitudes and views regarding entering into mentoring relationships amongst men within the church.  

 Thesis Statement  

This researcher has mentored several women within the church from a wide range of ages, and as a result conjectured that women congregants’ views towards women mentoring one another in the church will reveal possible barriers to entering into this type of relationship. Research surrounding these possible barriers will be discussed further in the next chapter.  

 Summary  

Discipleship is important to the Christian faith, and mentoring can be a valuable component to the discipleship process. The Christian walk can be challenging, and a lot of what is learned is not only taught but caught through observing others. Mentoring can provide both a teaching and observational element. As stated previously, mentoring is not as utilized in the church for discipleship purposes as it could be, and the researcher would like to explore why this may be the case, specifically amongst women in the church. There can be a number of reasons for this, as will 

be discussed throughout this research project. In the proceeding chapters, a foundation will be laid for understanding the importance of discipleship and to support the utilization of mentoring in the discipleship process. There will also be an exploration of possible reasons as to why this may not be occurring amongst women in the church to the extent it could be based on the review of various literature and through applied research conducted by the researcher.
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As previously stated, there are many women not being discipled within the church. There is not just one way to do discipleship; however, some methods are more effective than others. Although mentoring is at a low within the church, it is still one of the most effective ways to do discipleship. Some believe it is the most effective way to make disciples. Author and Bible teacher Natasha Sistrunk Robinson states:

Mentoring is the most effective way we equip children of God to live as honorable citizens in the world. As disciples, we stand against Satan because we are the possessors of God’s kingdom (Matt. 16:17–20). We are privileged children, and our task as priests is monumental. We cannot entrust the work of the kingdom to a select few while the rest watch from the sidelines. As children of the King, we all share in the responsibility of mentoring and making disciples who make disciples.14

This thesis project is rooted in the concept that fostering more mentoring relationships amongst women in the church will result in an increase in the quantity and quality of female disciples. The research will identify the attitudes and views that women have towards mentoring for the purpose of discipleship. Understanding women’s views and attitudes towards mentoring for discipleship purposes may provide insight into possible barriers to women entering mentoring relationships. If barriers do exist to entering into this type of relationship, then identifying what they are can enable the researcher to develop a solution to overcoming these barriers and increase mentoring for discipleship purposes amongst women in the church.

In order to research effectively any subject matter, there needs to be a review of existing material about that subject matter. This allows the researcher to build on the foundation of previous research. The literature review section below will provide information from experts in the field of study that is relevant to discipleship, mentoring, and challenges women may face personally and in

the church, that may have an impact on how they view mentoring within the church. It will further survey what research has been done concerning the state of discipleship within the Christian church and the role that mentoring plays within discipleship. It will also present research findings surrounding women’s experiences with mentoring in general and within the church and whether it is viewed as beneficial within the discipleship process. The literature review will also provide insight into what possible barriers may exist that impact women entering into mentoring relationships with one another. This section will also include a literature review of the theological and theoretical foundations that support the need for this research topic.

**Literature Review**

In order to set the parameters of this project a further overview of what is meant by mentoring and discipleship is needed. A definition of the terms disciple and mentor will also be provided. For one to truly follow Christ, one has to become a disciple. A disciple of Christ is being defined as someone who has a relationship with Christ and follows and obeys His teachings and commands. This is important because in order to be a Christian one must follow Christ in every area and aspect of life. Every believer must be shown how to do this, especially new believers who do not know automatically how to start following the example Jesus set in His life. The term mentor is being defined as “a person who is skilled, knowledgeable, a visionary, dynamic, and committed to the process of improving individual’s skills. The mentor exhibits behaviors of guiding, coaching, nurturing, teaching, and modeling all for advancement of the protégé.”

15 Martin Sanders, author of *The Power of Mentoring: Shaping People Who Will Shape the World*, identifies the importance of mentoring and discipleship to the personal and spiritual development of followers of Christ.

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Sanders makes an important distinction between mentoring and discipleship by defining both terms and demonstrating how discipleship can be included in the mentoring relationship. He states:

Discipleship, by its design and limitations, is best focused on specific spiritual maturity and developmental issues. Mentoring, however, can be used in a much broader developmental context and describes areas of development, such as skill acquisition, that go beyond the specific realm of spirituality and spiritual development.¹⁶

The two terms are different and not interchangeable, as some might suggest. These definitions help make a clear distinction between mentoring and discipleship.

In a world where people are searching for and craving answers and direction in life, mentoring within the church can create a space to connect and learn from others who have more wisdom and life experience.¹⁷

We need guides, however, not gurus. Caring, sensitive, approachable friends who help us negotiate through the labyrinth of life, and who warn us of the moral pitfalls along the way, are of inestimable value. To see how they integrate theory and practice, or indeed how "head," "heart," and "arm" enable them to make sense of all of life, make such mentors so readily desirable.¹⁸

Mentoring allows for individuals to have a role-model in their personal and spiritual development process. This is a plus for individuals and the church as a body because this type of relationship can also lead to the development of skilled, knowledgeable leaders within the church. Every institution needs leaders, and the church is no different. Women, on the whole, can find mentoring in the church to be beneficial especially because of the leadership development that can be implemented in the process.

Mentoring relationships within ministry teach more than simple elements of preaching and teaching. These relationships allow good leadership skills and practices to develop. Mentors

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help women in ministry to identify with the struggles and issues of oppression. Mentoring bridges the gap between academia and the church. Through the experiences of the mentor, the mentee is encouraged to become successful in navigating the challenges and obstacles in ministry.¹⁹

There are several examples of men and women having mentoring relationships in the Scriptures. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, mentors Moses, showing him how to lead others well and not burn himself out in the process (Exodus 18:13-27). After having been mentored himself, Moses becomes a mentor. In the book of Numbers, Moses anoints Joshua and takes him under his tutelage. Moses teaches Joshua how to be a good leader to the Israelites and gives him the authority to lead. By doing this, Moses is preparing Joshua to succeed him in leading the Israelites to the Promised Land. Another mentoring relationship can be found between the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Elisha is trained by Elijah to succeed him as prophet and to continue his ministry (1Kings 19:16). In the book of Ruth, Naomi mentors Ruth by showing her how to adjust to a foreign culture and religion. Naomi also guides Ruth through the courting process between her and Boaz. In 1 and 2 Timothy, Paul mentors Timothy through his writing by instructing him on how to pastor others and by modeling the role of a pastor himself. Specifically, in 1 Timothy 1:18-19 we see Paul encouraging Timothy to have faith and “fight the good fight” in his Christian walk. In 2 Timothy 1:13-14, Paul reminds Timothy to hold to the sound teaching that he learned from him and to guard it since God has entrusted him with it. According to Efrain Agosto, “Both of these passages point to a faith that is based on a body of doctrines, established teaching, that one receives through instruction from a mentor, like Paul, that one preserves like a treasure and passes on to another.

generation of believers.” Priscilla and Aquila are also a great example of mentors within the Scriptures. They take Apollos into their home and teach him a more accurate depiction of the way of God, including a fuller understanding of who Jesus is (Acts 18:26).

Leroy Eims, author of *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, believes the extensive training Jesus provided the disciples is not being provided in the church today like it should be. “The idea of an older Christian coaching, developing or helping a young believer to grow, develop and mature is replete in the Bible.” Today people have gotten further and further from the original design Jesus provided for making disciples. Eims concludes this is due to discipleship being reduced to the implementation of programs instead of people taking the time to do life together. Discipling others like Jesus takes time and patience.

It takes time to make disciples. It takes individual, personal attention. It takes hours of prayer for them. It takes patience and understanding to teach them how to get into the Word of God for themselves, how to feed and nourish their souls, and by the power of the Holy Spirit how to apply the word to their lives. And it takes being an example to them of all of the above.

It is the amount of time required in terms of scheduling and meeting with a mentor, level of dedication, in terms of giving oneself fully to the mentoring process and investment, in terms of the energy and effort put in over time for transformation to occur, that makes mentoring a great component of the discipleship process. Unfortunately, it is these same factors that can also be an obstacle to entering into mentoring relationships for discipleship purposes. Mentoring tends to

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24 Ibid., 45.
occur on a smaller scale and is done either one-on-one or amongst small groups. A wise mentor will be selective regarding whom he or she mentors and will also limit how many people he or she mentors, due to the time, resources and energy it can take to mentor others effectively. Jim Stump states,

I can’t think of one person who has had a greater impact on the world for Jesus than Billy Graham---at least in the twentieth century. Countless thousands have come to Christ at his large group meetings. Yet even he understood that true disciples are built not from a pulpit but one-on-one, in small, intimate settings. I am convinced myself that if pastors of churches around the world would just take Billy Graham’s advice and begin mentoring assistant pastors and elders, who go on to mentor other leaders in their churches, then the first-century spiritual explosion would happen all over again in this age!

Although discipleship is essential to the Christian faith, research has found that the viewpoint on effective discipleship differs amongst congregants and church leaders. Christian adults were asked if their churches are doing well at discipleship, and their answers differed significantly from those of church leaders. Barna Group research reports:

Christian adults believe their churches are doing well when it comes to discipleship: 52 percent of those who have attended church in the past six months say their church “definitely does a good job helping people grow spiritually” and another 40 percent say it “probably” does so…“Church leaders, conversely, tend to believe the opposite is true. Only 1 percent say “today’s churches are doing very well at discipling new and young believers.” A sizable majority—six in 10—feels that churches are discipling “not too well” (60%).

According to Barna Group research, pastors believe the most important aspects of discipleship deal with matters of the heart. Pastors also believe a personal commitment to becoming more like Christ, attending a local church, and having a deep love for God are key for effective discipleship.

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Engaging in a discipleship curriculum is the least effective means to doing discipleship.\textsuperscript{28} The majority of the younger generations, including Millennials, also report that they are encouraged and inspired by others in their faith experience. They are more likely to grow in peer groups or when reading Scriptures with others. The implication of this is that churches need to reconsider how they are connecting to younger Christians, especially when it comes to relational and mentoring forms of spiritual development.\textsuperscript{29}

**Women Mentoring Women**

As women are maturing in their Christian faith, they need someone to disciple them and teach them how to follow and obey Christ and deal with the unique challenges’ women face. Keum Ju Hyun states, “The local church must help all women to have a healthy identity and a healthy womanhood, which will develop Christ centered character. We need to develop mentors. Having mentors will not solve all of the problems that our young sisters face today; however, it will certainly allow the church to meet some of their needs and follow a biblical mandate.”\textsuperscript{30} The Christian walk is not easy, and a lot of what is learned is not only taught but learned through observation. Mentoring is something that can provide not only an opportunity for teaching, but also for demonstrating how to live out the Christian faith. This is why women mentoring other women within the church is crucial.

Unfortunately, there are challenges that women face that can deter them from mentoring one another. “Women won’t commit to mentoring others for various reasons. Some women believe they just don’t have the time to mentor well. Some older women feel they are not equipped to mentor or


\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 7.

they incorrectly conclude that they don’t have much to offer. Younger women may be juggling
careers, school, and relationships. They may want mentoring but don’t know whom to ask or how
to get started.” These challenges will be explored further in the following section.

**Gender Biases**

Society is male dominated, and as a result, there are biases against women and privileges
available to men that women do not have.

In recent years, the number of women entering the ministry has grown, calling for greater
attention to preparation, support, and mentoring, not only of leader’s spiritual lives but also
their jobs and careers. Today, however, the ministry remains a male-dominated profession.
Thus, women who choose to embark in this profession face challenges and struggles, which
their male counterparts often do not experience…Many have reported how leadership
education is often attained primarily through observation. To assist the future leaders of
tomorrow, a more strategic approach to mentoring needs to be used.32

These biases can be seen in academia, the workplace, the home and in the church. The impact this
can have on women’s perceptions of themselves and the roles they play in society and in church is
significant.33

The bias against women in ministry is well documented by many scholars, both secular and
religious, from theological, sociological, psychological, political, and economic
perspectives. These scholars have explored the hermeneutics, patriarchy, and power
relations that keep women from readily being accepted or compensated as leaders not only
in the church, but also in the business world and in society in general.34

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32 Deseree Newkirk and Bruce S. Cooper. "Preparing Women for Baptist Church Leadership: Mentoring
Impact on Beliefs and Practices of Female Ministers," *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 22, no. 3

33 Jaco J. Hamman, "Resistance to Women in Ministry and the Psychodynamics of Sadness," *Pastoral
Psychology* 59, no. 6 (December 2010): 771. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed
March 16, 2018).

34 Ibid., 770.
Researchers Johnson and Penya describe how their daughters learned about gender biases within the church from a very early age:

They learned the rules at a very young age by simply being present and observing, non-critically, the practices of a religious community in specific instances. Over a relatively short period of time, our daughters had been formed in gender-specific ways such that they could, in a rather matter-of-fact manner, articulate, “Girls can’t do that” and “That is what boys do.”

Unfortunately, gender bias is something that can be learned at an early age in the church or in society at large, whether through direct teaching or observation. This impacts the roles and positions in which young girls, who become women, believe they can or are even permitted to function.

Women are hesitant to step into a significant role of ministry because they honestly believe it is not their place to do so. They have previously understood that the Bible places great restrictions on their ministry in the church, and they sincerely desire to be obedient to God’s plan. They need the strong confidence of scriptural clarity to step out.”

The Scriptures encourage women to mentor other women in the book of Titus, stating the older women should teach the younger ones, so this is something women are encouraged to do.

**Leadership Development**

When it comes to leadership within the church, it has been proven that there is a lack of leadership development for women. “There is a dearth of women in upper levels of leadership in every church structure, and it is difficult to raise women into senior leadership without female role models and mentors, especially in organizations where cross-gender mentoring is frowned upon.

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This means change isn’t just going to happen naturally.” Many women may feel unprepared to mentor or lead another woman in her spiritual development because of this.

Even in churches that espouse gender equality, women woefully lack leadership opportunities, especially on the platform. When they do get up to speak or give direction, they may quickly lose credibility because they lack the expertise that comes with training and practice. What is forgivable in a man who is gaining experience may be considered obnoxious in a woman, and proof that she shouldn’t have been on the platform in the first place.

Within the church there is a tendency for men and women to view women in leadership positions negatively. Pastor Francis T. Cary set out to interview men and women within various denominations on their views towards female clergy. She interviewed men and women between the ages of 25 and 79. She found that men and women held similar views towards female clergy. Men and women had an overall negative view when it comes to women in leadership. Cary reports:

Responses varied based on the gender and denomination of the persons interviewed. To my surprise there were more similarities than differences with regard to gender regardless of denominational background. I initially had imagined that the differences would be significant based on gender, but the responses open wide my eyes to the fact that women are viewed beneath men when it comes to leadership.

Having more men in leadership positions within the church in general and a negative view towards women in leadership positions in the church can lead to a lack of women mentoring women in the church. “Previous generations of women were mostly denied access to the great portals of power, so female mentors to this rising generation are generally much fewer. The large percentage of leadership mentors are men, and in Christian climates, cross-gender mentoring is

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38 Ibid., 16.


40 Ibid., 280.
often frowned upon or outright denied.\textsuperscript{41} Having a lack of women in leadership positions within the church may cause women to seek out male mentors or discourage them from seeking mentoring at all. Although one does not have to be in a leadership position within the church to mentor someone else, those in leadership are often viewed as more qualified to mentor others over a person not in a leadership position. This can be for several reasons, including training and education that may be afforded to those in leadership positions, or a level of authority that comes with being in a leadership position.

Increasing leadership development in the church amongst women can lead to higher rates of women in leadership and widen the pool of potential mentors for women. It can also be beneficial to teach congregants that women not in leadership positions can teach and mentor other women as encouraged in 2 Timothy.

We women can’t rely just on pastors to give us the help we need in our growth as Christians. We can learn principles from the man at the podium, but we need more than principles to really live out our Christian walk. We can learn a lot about the Word of God from our pastor, but God has specifically laid down the way women are to be taught to live their everyday lives: by older women. Women can better teach other women how to love their husbands; to love their children; to be ‘discreet, chaste home-makers, good, obedient to their own husbands’ (Titus 2:5).\textsuperscript{42}

This is still taking on a leadership role, although it may not be a leadership position within the church. This can encourage more women to step into the role of leader within the church and provide more room for women to lead, especially if leadership positions in the church are limited.

Research conducted by Bobbi Hume addresses the lack of women within secondary school leadership positions, including assistant principal, principal, and superintendent. Upon interviewing


\textsuperscript{42} Rebecca Osaigbovo, \textit{Spiritual Sisterhood: Mentoring for Women of Color} (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books), 2011, 22.
several women who were leaders in the secondary school system, Hume concludes that women-to-
women mentoring is needed in order for more women to be successful leaders within the school 
system. Much like the church, there are more women than men within the school system, however 
it is men that make up most of the administrative leadership within the schools. Based on the 
results of the interviews conducted, Hume suggests that women who are in school leadership 
positions can help encourage and train other women to be better prepared to become leaders within 
the school system through mentoring. She believes same-gender mentoring is best in this case. 

Hume states:

  Effective mentors may need to know and understand the nature of women’s lives including their 
hopes, aspirations, and the gender specific challenges of the work world. Women may need to 
mentor other women because men and women school leaders often do not face the same issues 
personally or professionally.

Although this research focuses on women in the school system and not the church, it is helpful 
in terms of highlighting the positive effects of women mentoring women. It also supports the notion 
that same-gender mentoring is best in certain cases because only a woman can truly understand the 
nature and experiences of a woman, and only a man can understand the nature and experiences of a 
man.

43 Bobbi A. Hume, "Beyond the Barriers: Women-to-Women Mentoring into Secondary School and 
Central Office Leadership," Order No. 3727821, University of Minnesota, 2015, 6-7 In PROQUESTMS ProQuest 
Dissertations & Theses Global, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-

44 Ibid., 46.
Cross-Gender Mentoring Issues

If there are not enough women to mentor one another, cross-gender mentoring is the next option; however, the potential for physical boundaries to be crossed is increased. “Cross-gender mentoring relationships do have the potential to lead to sexual involvement between the mentor and protégé. The intensity of mentoring relationships can contribute to sexual attraction. This attraction may lead to sexually intimate relationships.”

This is another reason same-gender mentoring is preferable for men and women. Studies conducted on students have shown the benefit of same-gender mentoring amongst women. “Mentoring relationships may involve mentors and protégés of the same or different genders. Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of female-to-female mentoring in relation to positive role modeling, shared experiences, and student identity development.”

Women must be encouraged to use their gifts and help one another grow in Christ whether they are in leadership positions or not.

Paul’s words and actions carried out Jesus’ command to make disciples. He accomplished this as Jesus did, through biblical mentoring relationships…. As part of the body of Christ, women must take a serious look at the commands and examples of Jesus and Paul. They must conclude that biblical mentoring relationships are not optional, Paul’s command in Titus 2 pinpoints the particular responsibility women have to be engaged in biblical mentoring relationships.

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Although leaders have this responsibility, it is not only leaders that can or are supposed to mentor others. There are too many people in the church that need to be discipled to leave mentoring just to those in leadership positions. Mentoring is often unavailable for women, especially those called to leadership, and this can contribute to the shortage of women mentors in the church.

We have a word for Jesus’ method of leadership development: mentoring. However, for a number of reasons, mentoring isn’t easily available to women called to leadership. This must change. We can’t just presume that if women are good enough, they’ll make it, nor can we send them to Bible schools and seminaries and hope they’ll find their own way from there. We need to develop mentoring streams for current and emerging women leaders. This means reforming cultures and practices that make mentoring unavailable to women, learning how to do mentoring, and clearing the way for women to actually step into leadership roles.  

**Generational Differences**

Older women and younger women can often feel worlds apart in terms of relating to one another because of the gap between their ages and generations. These differences can cause women to shy away from one another or to overlook one another as possible mentors and mentees. Sophie Hudson reports:

> I see it all the time when I go into churches to speak: younger women on one side of the room, older women on the other, both groups trying to figure each other out. I hear it, too. Younger women mention offhandedly that they don’t have any family in town and they’d really like to have an older woman in their life. Older women tell me that they wish they knew how to connect with the younger girls—that it would be so fun to go to lunch or go shopping together—but it’s likely they’re speaking different languages. So there’s definitely a desire to walk together, but unfortunately, for a whole host of reasons, we’re (mostly) missing each other along the way.

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**Low Self-Esteem and Feelings of Inadequacy**

Women can also feel inadequate when it comes to mentoring another woman. There is a belief that in order to disciple someone you must be an expert, know the Bible in and out, and live a perfect life. This is not the case as there is no one who lives or lived a perfect, sin-free life except Jesus.

We hear the word “mentor” and we think of someone who has to be able to lead another woman through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and show her how to maximize her budget and maybe even teach her to crochet while communicating the top 10 most important aspects of holiness. There’s some degree of misconception that a mentor is responsible for teaching us all there is to know about being a woman of God, and in my experience that puts all the pressure on both the mentor and the mentee.\(^50\)

Another reason women may fail to mentor other women is because of fear or low self-esteem. They may not be accustomed to being role-models or leaders, and it can cause them to fear they will not be capable of mentoring other women. They may not value themselves and the gifts Christ has given them, which can make them hesitant to view themselves as mentor material.

After a lifetime of being told they are not suited for it, a call to leadership can be extremely difficult for women to embrace. Developing mentorships and stepping into leadership can take a lot of courage.... Many women miss opportunities because of fear, low self-esteem, and shame. It’s easy for women to undervalue their gifts and worry how they will be perceived if they take initiative in applying for a job or asking for a raise. Other times, women are ashamed of their leadership call. Or, they fall into a trap of comparison and are afraid to be open and honest with mentors\(^51\)

Some women may think they cannot mentor other women if they were not mentored themselves or if they have room for growth in some areas. This is not the case. “Many women think they won’t be good mentors because they weren’t mentored themselves. But someone needs to break the cycle. Make the decision to reverse the trend and be a good leadership role model for other women and

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\(^{50}\) Sophie Hudson, *Giddy up, Eunice: (Because Women Need Each Other)*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group), 2016, 58, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed March 9, 2018).

What makes a good mentor is someone who loves the Lord and others, studies and lives the Scriptures, is spiritually mature, and knows how to walk alongside another person through good and bad. “Serving as a mentor doesn’t imply that you are fully mature. In fact, you may have a mentor while you mentor someone else. Serving as an effective mentor does mean that you are open to Christ, learning and growing, and actively pursuing your own wholeness (maturity).” There is no requirement that one must have been mentored to be a mentor. However, as stated above, some women may find it beneficial to have a mentor while mentoring another woman. This can help the mentor continue to grow while she is helping her mentee to grow.

**Work-Home Life Balance**

Women have many responsibilities, and these increase as they become mothers and as they try to build careers for themselves and to better their families. Having duties and responsibilities to tend to as wife and mother while working may hinder some women from mentoring other women. The work-home life balance can cause a dilemma for many women due to a lack of time. Block and Tietjen-Smith found that women faculty members find that work-family balance is a major issue in navigating their careers. Although this study is focused on women faculty members in schools, it speaks to some of the challenges women face in society. Work-family balance is something many women struggle with. Women may feel they do not have time to mentor other women because their busy schedules will not allow it. However, in order to grow and learn how to navigate through work and life challenges women may need someone who has gone through similar experiences to overcome those challenges successfully. The impact of having a mentor in situations like this can

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52 Ibid., 18.
be seen in the results of a study conducted on women faculty members. “In one study, female faculty who were purposefully mentored were more likely to stay in the university, received more grant income and higher level promotion, and had better perceptions of themselves as academics compared with non-mentored female academics.”\textsuperscript{55}

As seen above, there are a number of factors that can cause women to struggle regarding their roles in the church, including that of mentor. Surveying various women to understand their views and attitudes towards mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes will provide an opportunity to identify any real or perceived barriers that may exist. The subsequent section will continue to build on the literature review by focusing on theological foundations for this research project.

**Theological Foundations**

When people come to Christ, they experience a conversion. *Lexico English Dictionary* defines conversion as “The fact of changing one's religion or beliefs or the action of persuading someone else to change theirs.”\textsuperscript{56} A biblical understanding sees conversion as “the turning of a sinner to God (Acts 15:3). In a general sense "the heathen are said to be "converted" when they abandon" heathenism and embrace the Christian faith; and in a more "special sense men are converted when, by the influence of divine" "grace in their souls, their whole life is changed, old things” “pass away, and all things become new (Acts 26:18)…”\textsuperscript{57} It is in the process of old things passing away and all

\textsuperscript{55} Betty Ann Block and Tara Tietjen-Smith, 2016, "The Case for Women Mentoring Women," *Quest.* 68, no. 3: 309.


things becoming new that a convert matures as a disciple of Christ. This occurs through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who transforms disciples into the image of Christ through the process of sanctification and the principles and practices of discipleship. “The generic meaning of sanctification is ‘the state of proper functioning.’ To sanctify someone or something is to set that person or thing apart for the use intended by its designer.... In the theological sense, things are sanctified when they are used for the purpose God intends. A human being is sanctified, therefore, when he or she lives according to God's design and purpose.”

Although it is important to have people convert to Christianity, there is more to Christianity than a person professing to believe in Christ or turning from one religion to the other. It is about having a relationship with Christ and being transformed into His image by the power of the Holy Spirit. Following Jesus and learning to be obedient to Him, becoming mature in the faith, and becoming more like Him are the ultimate goal. This is the heart of discipleship. When Jesus commissioned the disciples, He told them, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). He did not say go and convert all nations. Conversion is a part of discipleship, but it does not stop there.

Everybody is happy when a sinner comes to Jesus—heaven rejoices, the convert rejoices, you rejoice. But are you satisfied? No, not yet. You shouldn’t be. The commission of Christ to you was to make disciples, not just get converts. So your objective now is to help this new Christian progress to the point where he is a fruitful, mature, and dedicated disciple.

There is a difference between professing that one is changing from one belief to another and dedicating one’s life to following someone and letting everything he or she says and does influence the way you think, act and believe. “Receiving life is not enough; you must nourish that life. When

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a baby is born in the natural, it will die unless its parents (or someone) take care of it. They must feed and nourish the baby’s physical life so it will grow. This is also true in relation to your new spiritual life. If you feed it, it will grow; if you neglect it, it will die.”

Paul states in the scriptures, “Follow me as I follow Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). There is a need to have those more mature in the Christian faith teach and guide those less mature in the faith regarding how to live out the ways and teachings of Christ. Mentoring is one of the most effective ways to accomplish this. It is a key relational component that can make discipleship a more powerful and transformative process.

It is through Jesus’ example that the church observes how discipleship is done. Studying the scriptures, one can see that Jesus not only taught His disciples, corrected them, encouraged them, and loved them, He also modeled ministry for them. This is a form of mentoring.

The New Testament Gospels also present a picture of Jesus as mentor. Jesus prayerfully handpicked twelve disciples and called them to give up everything and follow him. He taught and trained them so they, in turn, would teach and train others to follow him as well. Through intimate communion with his heavenly Father, he modeled a life of being in God’s presence and then humbly doing everything his Father commanded. He taught his disciples what it means to be a true leader—to be a servant to others. He grew their wisdom and knowledge, journeyed with them through life’s messes and suffering, and called them his friends. Jesus was the image they were to reflect to the rest of the world. He was the perfect mentor.

The disciples then went on to make other disciples by mentoring them just as Jesus had done for them. There are several biblical principles to support mentoring as a form of discipleship as well as biblical support for men mentoring men and women mentoring women. The Scriptures include examples of what this looks like and the benefits of these type of relationships. These principles and supporting scriptures will be discussed below to develop the theological foundations of discipleship.

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and mentoring in general and the need for women mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes.

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, Paul points out to the believers in Corinth that when they first believed in Christ, he had to talk to them as infants in Christ because they were just learning how to follow Christ and mature spiritually. In verse 2 Paul states, “I gave you milk not solid food, for you were not ready for it.” He goes on to say that the Corinthians are still not ready for solid food because they are still acting worldly and immature. This passage demonstrates that there is a need to teach believers how to grow spiritually, and the teaching must not be too mature at first or they will not be able to digest or understand it well.

An important application of this is the value of investing in worker development, whether our own or that of people around us. In Paul’s letters, including 1 Corinthians, it sometimes seems that Paul never does anything himself but instructs others how to do it. This is not arrogance or laziness, but mentoring. He would far rather invest in training effective workers and leaders than in calling all the shots himself. 62

2 Timothy 2:2 discusses the need for Timothy to share what he has learned from Paul with other reliable and qualified people who will, in turn, be able to teach others what they have learned. This shows the importance of passing on knowledge to others.

Not only has Timothy received teaching from previous generations, but Paul intends for him to pass on what he has learned to succeeding generations as well: “What you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well” (2 Tim. 2:2). This theme challenges Christian workers to consider what kind of legacy they want to leave behind at their places of employment and in their industry. The first step toward leaving a positive legacy is to do your job faithfully and to the best of your ability. A further step would be to train your successor, so that whoever is going to replace you one day is prepared to do your job well. A Christian worker should be humble enough to learn from others and compassionate enough to teach patiently. 63

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Paul is not able to teach everyone, so he teaches Timothy, who can then teach others and equip them to teach others. This allows more people to learn of Christ because the pattern allows the reproduction of more qualified people to teach.

Proverbs 27:17 is a passage of Scripture that points out that people can strengthen one another. “Iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” If someone is strong in the Lord, she can be of help to another believer. She can help the other believer become stronger, and, in turn, both will be stronger as they mature in Christ together. This is exactly what can happen in the context of a mentoring relationship.

Iron sharpeneth iron.... A sword or knife made of iron is sharpened by it; so butchers sharpen their knives; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend; by conversation with him; thus learned men sharpen one another's minds, and excite each other to learned studies; Christians sharpen one another's graces, or stir up each other to the exercise of them, and the gifts which are bestowed on them, and to love and to good works.64

1 Thessalonians 2:8 deals with Paul, Silas and Timothy caring for the Thessalonians just as a mother cares for her children. Out of their love for the Thessalonians they share the gospel with them, but also share their lives.

To be willing to communicate the knowledge of the gospel was in itself a strong proof of love, even if it were attended with no self-denial or hazard in doing it. We evince a decided love for a man when we tell him of the way of salvation, and urge him to accept of it. We show strong interest for one who is in danger, when we tell him of a way of escape, or for one who is sick, when we tell him of a medicine that will restore him; but we manifest a much higher love when we tell a lost and ruined sinner of the way in which he may be saved. There is no method in which we can show so strong an interest in our fellow-men, and so much true benevolence for them, as to go to them and tell them of the way by which they may be rescued from everlasting ruin.65


This paints the picture of them doing life together and not just focusing on spiritual matters but also on everyday life. Paul, Silas and Timothy were able to set an example on how to live as a follower of Christ, so they did not just teach about following Christ, but they modeled it, as well.

Philippians 4:9 discusses Paul’s instruction for the Philippians to put into practice what they learned from him and saw him do. This suggests Paul taught the Philippians not just in word but in deed. In a mentoring relationship it is important for the mentor to not only teach and share insight but to also model how to apply what they are teaching in everyday life. Paul is serving as a mentor for the Philippians.

These things which ye have both learned, Meaning from himself, in a doctrinal way: and received; not only into their heads but hearts, had embraced cordially, with great affection, in the love thereof, as well as given a full assent to: and heard; either publicly or privately, from the pulpit, or in conversation; or had heard of him when absent, or from him when present: and seen in me: in his life and conversation, which were well known, and were a pattern to them that believe; and therefore he adds, do; practice the same things which they had learned from him as their duty, and had heard him urge as such, and had seen exemplified in himself.66

Matthew 28:19-20 presents the commissioning of the disciples by Jesus to make more disciples from all nations. Jesus tells them to baptize disciples and teach them to observe all His commands. This commission is extended to all disciples, and there is a responsibility of every believer to make other disciples.

Finally, the narrative teaches us about our mission. Because Jesus' future reign (28:18) has begun in the lives of his followers in the present age (v. 20), his people should exemplify his reign on earth as it is in heaven, as people of the kingdom, people of the future era (compare 6:10). Most significant in this passage, because Jesus has all authority, because he is King in the kingdom of God, disciples must carry on the mission of teaching the kingdom (10:7). Jesus’ instructions include an imperative (a command) surrounded by three participial clauses: one should make disciples for Jesus by going, baptizing and teaching. Making disciples involves more than getting people to an altar; it involves training them as

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thoroughly as Jewish teachers instructed their own students. Most of modern Christendom falls far short on this count.67

Jesus mentions teaching disciples to obey all His commands because being a disciple involves more than believing in Jesus. Discipleship calls for following and obeying Jesus, but people need to be taught how to do this by other disciples.

Hebrews 13:7 encourages the believers in that time to remember the teachings of their leaders. They are to consider how they lived their lives and then imitate their faith. Again, here is an example of believers who are spiritually more knowledgeable and experienced, teaching and modeling how to live out their faith in everyday life to those less experienced.

Remember them which have the rule over you - Margin, "are the guides." The word used here means properly "leaders, guides, directors." It is often applied to military commanders. Here it means teachers - appointed to lead or guide them to eternal life. It does not refer to them so much as rulers or governors, as teachers, or guides. In Hebrews 13:17, however, it is used in the former sense. The duty here enjoined is that of remembering them; that is, remembering their counsel; their instructions; their example.68

1 Corinthians 11:1 focuses on Paul encouraging the Corinthians to follow him as he follows Christ. This implies that Paul is following Christ and knows how to show others how to follow Christ. Believers are to have a relationship with Christ for themselves, but it is important to have someone who is more mature spiritually be a role-model to those who are not as spiritually mature.

As I deny myself; as I seek to give no offense to anyone; as I endeavor not to alarm the prejudices of others, but in all things to seek their salvation, so do you. This verse belongs to the previous chapter, and should not have been separated from it. It is the close of the discussion there. Even as I also am of Christ - I make Christ my example. He is my model in all things; and if you follow him, and follow me as far as I follow him, you will not err. This is the only safe example; and if we follow this, we can never go astray.69

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Paul is confident that he is following Christ well enough that he can encourage others to follow his example. This is significant because a mentor needs to have a relationship with Christ and be able to set an example for those they are mentoring and discipling.

1 Corinthians 4:14-16 discusses Paul reminding the Corinthians that he is like a spiritual father to them. Paul states, “Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me.” He then goes on to say how he is sending Timothy to model for them how to follow Christ since Timothy learned his ways from Paul. This type of leadership creates a pattern for mentoring and discipleship.

Wherefore - Since I am your spiritual father. Be ye followers of me - Imitate me; copy my example; listen to my admonitions. Probably Paul had particularly in his eye their tendency to form parties; and here admonishes them that he had no disposition to form sects, and entreats them in this to imitate his example. A minister should always so live as that he can, without pride or ostentation, point to his own example; and entreat his people to imitate him. He should have such a confidence in his own integrity; he should lead such a blameless life; and "he should be assured that his people have so much evidence of his integrity," that he can point them to his own example, and entreat them to live like himself.70

Philippians 3:17 focuses on Paul encouraging the Philippians to follow his example and he goes a step further encouraging them to watch others who live like him in the church. So, Paul is directing the Philippians to have role models in addition to himself.

What is in view from his heritage is the pupil who learned not simply by receiving instruction but by putting into practice the example of the teacher; the one who so imitates, internalizes and lives out the model presented by the teacher. Also in that heritage ethical life was thought of in terms of "walking in the ways of the Lord." Thus Paul urges the Philippians to take note of those who "walk just as you have us as a model." The grammar and language of this clause imply a group of people that extends beyond the Philippians themselves.71


This scripture is important because Paul functions as an Apostle in the church, and yet he is encouraging the Philippian believers to follow others that are living a Christ-like life, so they had others that were able to be an example when Paul was not present.

Matthew 4:18-22 shows Jesus selecting His disciples. “‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people’” (Matthew 4:19). Jesus wanted to teach them truths and principles in word, but He realized the importance of setting an example and doing life together so that they could learn of him through relationship and embody what He taught and modeled.

Just as Jesus' message concurred with that of John, so the message of Jesus' followers must accord with that of Jesus. We must proclaim the imminence of the kingdom (10:7; compare 28:18), demonstrate God's rule over sickness and demons (10:8), and pass on our Master's teachings (28:19). In 4:18-22 the One whom the Father called now calls others who will advance his mission. Jesus' call to leave profession and family was radical, the sort of demand that only the most radical teacher would make. This text provides us several examples of servant-leadership and radical discipleship.72

Titus 2:3-5 focuses on instruction Paul gives to the women of Crete. Titus is to teach the older women how to live reverently and prepare them to teach the younger women how they are to live.

The positive quality of “teaching good things” reminds older women that they are responsible to model the acceptable and respectable life for younger women…. This is a notion the church today could draw on much more than it does. We have bought into the notion that older people have had their day of usefulness and ought to make a way for the young. But the principle here is quite the opposite. With age and experience come wisdom, and many older women have discovered secrets of godly living in relation to their husbands, children and neighbors and in the workplace that could save younger women a lot of unnecessary grief. And when the unavoidable trials come to the young woman, who better to guide her through than an older sister who has been through it before?73


This passage of Scripture is foundational for this thesis project as it deals with women mentoring women in the church. It provides a model of how women can mature personally and spiritually as disciples of Christ.

Luke 1:39-56 is a passage of Scripture that shows the relationship between two very important women in the Bible, Elizabeth and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary stayed with Elizabeth, her older cousin, for three months during this visit and prepared for marriage and motherhood. It has been suggested this relationship included an aspect of mentoring. Jean-Pierre Ruiz states:

The encounter between Mary and Elizabeth likewise underlines the place of key life transitions in the relationship between mentor and protégée. The two women’s shared experience of pregnancy extends the bonds of kinship between them. While the experience is proper to each and while neither can shoulder the other’s responsibilities, the communication between them that the single reported exchange symbolizes provides sustenance, strength and support to both, breaking the isolation that would bar each of them from entering into the deepest possible understanding of themselves and of the course of their lives.  

Having an older woman to give her advice and be an example would have been important to Mary especially since she was young and had never been married, let alone pregnant. Although Elizabeth had not been a mother either, she did have experience being married and had more life experience than her younger cousin Mary. As a result of this there are principles that Elizabeth could impart to Mary.

If nothing else, Mary and Elizabeth remind us that women need each other—and when culture or circumstances or maybe cynicism threatens to keep us distant even though we are made for discipleship, we have to work that much harder to find our way into each other’s lives. Maybe that means we seek out an older cousin. Maybe that means we turn around to the college girl who sits behind us every Sunday and invite her to lunch. Maybe that means

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a few of you thirty-somethings decide to spend a semester in one of your church’s book clubs for the sixty-plus set.75

Ruth 2:19-23 provides another example of a woman mentoring another woman. Naomi and Ruth, a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, have a strong bond that goes deeper than the marriage that made them family. After Ruth’s husband dies, she stays with her mother-in-law and moves back to her mother-in-law’s homeland. These verses of Scripture demonstrate Naomi instructing Ruth on how to interact with Boaz, the family’s kinsman redeemer. It is through Naomi’s counsel and instruction that Ruth is able to be in a position to marry Boaz. Ruth did not know the customs of the land, and without Naomi’s help and example, she would not know how to carry herself in a foreign land. Naomi acts as a mother and mentor to Ruth, and it changes both of their lives.

As demonstrated throughout the various Scriptures presented and literature surrounding the theology of discipleship, there is substantial support for mentoring as a component of discipleship. Mentoring brings a relational depth that can enhance the discipleship process. It can be beneficial for the growth and development of all followers of Christ. Although there are times when men and women mentored one another in the Scriptures, like the example of Priscilla and Aquila mentoring Apollos, the majority of the mentoring relationships were men with men and women with women. This is significant and provides support for the vital role women can play as mentors in the lives of other women in the church, especially for discipleship purposes. The following section will offer theoretical foundations for the support of mentoring in the discipleship process and the need for women mentoring women within the church for discipleship purposes.

75 Sophie Hudson, Giddy up, Eunice: (Because Women Need Each Other), (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group), 2016, 60, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed March 9, 2018).
Theoretical Foundations

The discipleship process involves teaching others how to follow and obey Jesus and the word of God. Mentoring plays a role in this process as it relates to learning how to follow Jesus. Jesus mentored His disciples by investing His time in them, living with them and teaching them how to live out God’s Word by setting an example. He did this for three years. This is how the disciples learned of Jesus and His ways. When Jesus left the earth, He left the disciples behind to continue His ministry.

When Jesus was developing the future leaders of the church, he didn’t choose the Twelve and send them off to seminary. He drew them close to himself, working intensively with them for a full three years. Subsequent to his resurrection, instead of staying around because the disciples weren’t ready for such an awesome responsibility, he handed the brand new church into their trembling hands, fully aware of their ignorance and that their leadership capacities were not yet fully developed. It was a brave move, but one that was entirely normal for Jesus, who continues to hand his church over to the unformed leaders of every generation. We have a word for Jesus’ method of leadership development: mentoring.76

After His resurrection and before His ascension, Jesus gave the disciples a mandate, the Great Commission. Jesus commissioned His disciples to go out and make other disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). This is significant because Jesus is not only commissioning the disciples at that time, but He is stating what He intends all disciples to do until He returns. This includes male and female disciples of Jesus. This can be seen in Titus 2 when Paul directs the older men to train the younger men and the older women to train the younger women in biblical doctrine and practices. The roles male and female disciples play in the discipleship process are important, and as Paul encourages in Titus 2, men should disciple men and women disciple women (Titus 2:1-8).

While there are instances in Scripture where men and women work together to disciple a man (Acts 18:26), the wisest biblical counsel is for men to disciple men and women to disciple women. Here Paul instructs older women to “train the young women” (Titus 2:4). There’s a clear sense of specificity and propriety in his words. It’s the women, not the men,

who are charged with giving words of biblical wisdom to younger women, with a view
toward encouraging them “to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure,
working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not
be reviled” (Titus 2:45). This means that (1) both men and women are necessary in the
disciple-making process, (2) there are important boundaries to be observed, and (3) the roles
of men and women are distinct.  

Discipleship in the twenty-first century is at a low. A recent survey conducted by Barna Group
concluded that:

Despite believing their church emphasizes spiritual growth, engagement with the practices
associated with discipleship leave [sic] much to be desired. For example, only 20 percent of
Christian adults are involved in some sort of discipleship activity—and this includes a wide
range of activities such as attending Sunday school or fellowship group, meeting with a
spiritual mentor, studying the Bible with a group, or reading and discussing a Christian book
with a group.  

According to the same research, congregants seem to have very different views on how well they
are discipled compared to the views of leaders in the church. “Christian adults believe their
churches are doing well when it comes to discipleship: 52 percent of those who have attended
church in the past six months say their church ‘definitely does a good job helping people grow
spiritually’ and another 40 percent say it ‘probably’ does so.” Meanwhile, the surveys indicate
that leaders have a different opinion. “Church leaders, conversely, tend to believe the opposite is
true. Only 1 percent say, ‘today’s churches are doing very well at discipling new and young
believers.’” This is important because it speaks to the deficit of discipleship in the church as a
whole.

77 Voddie Baucham Jr. “Equipping the Generations: A Three-Pronged Approach to Discipleship,” The
Journal of Family Ministry 2, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 74. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials,
EBSCOhost (accessed May 2, 2018).

78 Barna Group, “New Research on the State of Discipleship.,” December 1, 2015, 3,

79 Ibid., 2.

80 Ibid., 2.
Although men need to be mentored and discipled as well, the focus of this project is on women and mentoring in the discipleship process. “Women’s ministries are vastly emerging both in churches and parachurch organizations. Thus, discipleship programs for and by women are becoming increasingly necessary. It is imperative that church leaders embrace the unique design God has for women.”

Designed for relationship, women generally grow best in the context of relationships…. Women understand this about themselves. They seek out relationships in which they may grow. Paul's instructions in Titus 2:3-5 for older women to encourage and teach younger women suggests that for women, “truth is to be taught in the context of relationships.” (Duncan 2006, 120). Women's ministry provides that relational setting for women to mature as disciples of Jesus Christ. As women communicate God's truth by instruction and example in a way that speaks to women's relational design, women learn how to live out and proclaim the work of Jesus Christ in their world.

Mentoring is highly relational and can provide an opportunity for women in the church to develop intimate relationships with one another, while simultaneously maturing spiritually and learning to follow Christ in all areas of life. “Mentoring relationships within ministry teach more than simple elements of preaching and teaching. These relationships allow good leadership skills and practices to develop. Mentors help women in ministry to identify with the struggles and issues of oppression.”

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Summary

As demonstrated throughout this literature review, mentoring and discipleship are important to a person’s spiritual development. It is also evident from chapter 2 of Titus that there are some instances that only a man can teach a man and a woman can teach a woman. This is why men mentoring men and women mentoring women is so important. In order to explore the underpinnings of women mentoring women in the church for the purpose of discipleship, a qualitative survey will be conducted amongst Christian women. This will include asking women to identify whether they have been mentored or not and if there were any barriers they may have had to entering into this type of mentoring relationship. The next section will expound on the methodology being used in this research project, why this type of methodology was chosen, and the limitations to utilizing the chosen methodology.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

As previously stated, discipleship is something particularly important to the continuity of Christianity and the spiritual growth of followers of Christ. Those who profess to follow Christ must learn how to follow Him in order to be His true disciples. One of the best ways to learn to follow Christ is by following the example of someone who is already following Christ and is spiritually mature. As highlighted throughout this research project, this type of following can be done in the form of a mentoring relationship. This research project solely focused on discipleship and mentoring amongst women in the church. The research explores the views and attitudes that women have towards mentoring one another in the church for the purpose of discipleship and seeks to determine if they have experienced any barriers to entering into such a mentoring relationship.

This chapter will present the methodological approach utilized to create the research instrument used for data collection. It will also present the data analysis techniques used to code and interpret responses in a way that was meaningful and substantive.

Intervention Design

Research Design

The researcher set out to understand women’s views and attitudes towards women mentoring women in the church. Gaining insight into how women feel about this may also identify what hindrances exist that prevent women from entering mentoring relationships with other women in the church for discipleship. An open- and closed-ended question survey was developed through an online platform to assess these attitudes and views, and a target was established of Christian women between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five.

Closed-ended questions are questions that have multiple answer choices where the participant chooses a response from the options provided. Open-ended questions are questions for
which answer choices are not provided. The participant must provide a detailed response that is not
guided by structured answer choices. The beginning of the survey included a confidentiality
statement for participants to read in order to decide if they agreed to the terms of participating in the
survey. The survey was anonymous, so it was not necessary for participants to provide a signature
to signify acceptance of the statement. Completing the survey was an indication of acceptance of
the confidentiality agreement.

The introduction to the survey asked participants to answer demographic questions that
provided multiple responses to choose. Some answers included “Other” as a response with a space
to provide a response not provided in the list. A demographic question was included on gender to
ensure only responses from women were obtained and utilized in the study. Participants were also
asked to indicate their ages since the survey was only for women between the ages of eighteen and
sixty-five. Other questions regarded daily activity (employment status), highest level of education,
marital status and church denomination.

After the demographics section followed a series of open- and closed-ended questions
including: Have you ever entered into a mentoring relationship WITH a MENTOR within the
church for discipleship purposes? If the response was Yes, then the following questions were
asked:
1. How did you find your mentor?
2. Was your mentor a male or female?
3. Did you have a preference of whether your mentor was male or female?
4. Was your mentor in a leadership position within the church?

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84 See Appendix A
5. In general, describe your attitudes and views on entering into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes.

6. Do you believe establishing a mentoring relationship improved your intimacy with Jesus, increased your practice of spiritual disciplines, influenced your leadership ability, shed light on your life purpose, or none of these responses?

7. Did your relationship with your mentor help you to deal with any challenges you may have faced as a disciple of Christ?

8. Describe any barriers that you had to overcome in establishing a mentoring relationship.

9. Did you identify with your mentor because he or she individually influenced you by being a good role model?

10. Did your mentor inspire you spiritually to cultivate your relationship with Christ?

11. Did your mentor assist you in setting goals to aid in your spiritual growth process?

12. Did your mentor hold you accountable to reach those goals?

13. Did your mentor provide you with any feedback or recognition upon accomplishing a goal?

14. How did your mentor stimulate you spiritually?

15. Did your mentor keep track of your spiritual growth?

16. Did you feel your mentor gave you individual consideration and personal attention by treating you in a way that showed he or she truly cared about you and your development?

17. How did being mentored for discipleship purposes impact your life overall as a disciple of Christ?

18. Have you ever entered into a mentoring relationship AS a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes?

If the answer was Yes to this question, then the following questions were asked:
19. Was the mentee male or female?

20. Did you prefer to do same-gender mentoring?

21. What influenced your decision to mentor someone for discipleship purposes?

22. How did you stimulate your mentee spiritually?

23. Did you strive to give your mentee individual consideration and personal attention by treating her in a way that shows you truly care about her and her development?

24. Would you recommend other women to enter into a mentoring relationship within the church for the purpose of discipleship based on your mentoring experience?

The survey then concluded for these participants.

If participants answered No to having ever entered into a mentoring relationship AS a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes, they were asked the following questions:

1. Would you be willing to mentor a mentee within the church for the purpose of discipleship? 2. Would you be open to mentoring a male or female mentee?

Upon answering these questions, these participants had completed the survey.

If the answer was No to the whether the participant had ever entered into a mentoring relationship WITH a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes, then the following questions were asked:

1. In general, describe your attitudes and views on entering into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes.

2. Have you ever wanted to enter into a mentoring relationship WITH a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes?

If the answer to this question was Yes, then the following questions were asked:

3. Did anything prevent you from finding a mentor?
4. Would you have preferred a male or female mentor, or did you have no preference?

5. If you would have had a mentor, do you believe he or she would have helped you to deal with any challenges you may have faced as disciple of Christ?

6. Were there any barriers that prevented you from entering into a mentoring relationship?

7. Do you think having a mentor would have made a difference in your spiritual development up to this point?

8. How do you think being mentored for discipleship purposes would have impacted your life overall as a disciple of Christ?

9. If you could turn back time in your discipleship process, would you attempt to enter into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes?

10. Have you ever entered into a mentoring relationship as a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes?

If the answer to this question was Yes, then the following questions were asked:

11. Was the mentee male or female?

12. Did you prefer to do same-gender mentoring?

13. What influenced your decision to mentor someone for discipleship purposes?

14. How did you stimulate your mentee spiritually?

15. Did you strive to give your mentee individual consideration and personal attention by treating them in a way that shows you truly care about them and their development?

16. Would you recommend other women to enter into a mentoring relationship within the church for the purpose of discipleship based on your mentoring experience?

If participants answered No to having ever entered into a mentoring relationship as a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes they were asked the following questions:
17. Would you be willing to mentor a mentee within the church for the purpose of discipleship?

18. Would you be open to mentoring a male or female mentee?

If participants answered No or Never thought about it to the question, Have you ever wanted to enter into a mentoring relationship WITH a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes?, then the following questions were asked:

19. Would you be willing to mentor a mentee within the church for the purpose of discipleship? If the answer was No, then this concluded the survey for those participants. If the response was Yes, then the next question was:

20. Would you be open to mentoring a male or female mentee? This then concluded the survey for those participants.

Research Approach

The researcher elected to use a qualitative research method to gather data for this thesis project. Qualitative research methods are utilized when a researcher intends to collect descriptive data as opposed to statistically driven data. Qualitative studies yield results that describe people’s experiences, attitudes, thoughts and behaviors. These are concepts that can be hard to measure using scales and measurements because the responses are subject to the participants individual experiences. “Qualitative methodology refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data—people’s own written or spoken words and observable behavior.”85 Due to the subject matter with which this project dealt, this method was preferable to a quantitative study because the researcher was more concerned with understanding the meaning participants have attached to certain experiences, which would require subjective data as opposed to objective

statistical data. The goal of this project was to understand the attitudes and views of women towards mentoring women in the church for discipleship purposes. The researcher also asked questions to identify if any of the participants had any barriers to entering into this type of mentoring relationship. There was no right or wrong answer to these types of questions because it was all subjective. Attitudes and viewpoints are subjective and based on the individual’s experiences.

This researcher then used the data to identify patterns and themes in the data to make connections based on the data gathered. The researcher did not start out with a hypothesis to prove or disprove but rather analyzed the data collected in order to gain insight and understanding of women’s views and attitudes towards mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes. Although there is a demographic section at the beginning of the survey which provided statistical information it was not the primary focus of this project. Demographic information was utilized to ensure results were only from Christian women between the ages of eighteen to sixty-five since these were the parameters of the research. It was also used to get a better understanding of the context in which the individuals were coming from and to add insight into the qualitative descriptive data provided throughout the survey responses.

The demographic information was not be used to make comparisons, show trends, or correlations between variables. If the demographic information was going to be used in this way it would have constituted a mixed method study, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. This would have been classified as a QUAL-quan mixed-methods approach. The qualitative aspect is capitalized because it is the primary focus, and the quantitative aspect is a supplemental method, so it is in lower case letters to make this distinction.

In Qual-quan mixed-methods research, the researcher uses quantitative measures to add to the description and richness of the core Qual component. The quan measures are used to ask
how much, how many, how much/many more, how high, how low, how soft, how loud, how painful; or even to measure change in the quantitative component.\textsuperscript{86}

Within Qualitative methodology there are different approaches that can be used. For the purpose of this study the researcher utilized the phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a research approach rooted in a 20\textsuperscript{th} century philosophical movement based on the work of Edmund Husserl. It is used to identify and capture perceptions, feelings, and experiences of individuals to understand certain phenomena.\textsuperscript{87}

A phenomenological study attempts to set aside biases and preconceived assumptions about human experiences, feelings, and responses to a particular situation. It allows the researcher to delve into the perceptions, perspectives, understandings, and feelings of those people who have actually experienced or lived the phenomenon or situation of interest.\textsuperscript{88}

The goal of phenomenology is not to generalize or quantify findings, but rather to get a deeper understanding of a particular phenomenon.\textsuperscript{89}

\textbf{Implementation of Intervention Design}

\textbf{Data Collection}

In order to identify participants for the survey, the researcher used a convenience sample and network sample. What made this a convenience sample is that the potential participants were easy to reach through social media or e-mail and were already within the researcher’s network. The researcher utilized a social media account on Facebook that was already existent and did not have to create a new group or personal page to recruit participants. The churches that were contacted


\textsuperscript{87} Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/research_ready/phenomenology/phen_overview (accessed October 13, 2008).

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.

separately are located in the researcher’s surrounding area of New York state. The researcher decided to share the survey on the researcher’s personal Facebook page because of the desire to capture insights from women in researcher’s sphere of influence and in researcher’s regional surroundings. The researcher mentors’ women on a regular basis and provides information for women who want to be mentored through her Facebook page. Women were encouraged through the survey invitation to share it with other women who might have been interested in taking the survey. This gave the researcher the opportunity to reach women with whom she was not friends on Facebook. Recruiting participants this way allowed the researcher to gain some insight on how the women in her network, sphere of influence, and regional surroundings felt about mentoring. This also allowed this researcher to identify any challenges or obstacles they may have had getting a mentor or becoming a mentor. The purpose in doing this was to get an idea of any obstacles that may exist for these women to enter into a mentoring relationship for discipleship, leading to the creation of a resolution so that more women can receive effective mentoring and become effective mentors. This could ultimately lead to increased opportunities for discipleship and spiritual growth in the church amongst women.

The researcher also compiled a list of churches to e-mail that are within her surrounding area of New York state. The researcher wanted to expand the sample to include women in various church denominations in her surrounding region to get broader results since the researcher mentors women in local congregations and this could lead to possible mentees in the future. The researcher compiled a list of fifty churches that were considered mega churches and that had an email address by which researcher could reach out to the pastor to ask that the opportunity to take the survey be shared with their female congregants. The churches contacted were chosen from a list of megachurches in New York state that are listed on the website of the Hartford Institute for Religion
Research. According to their website, these megachurches in their database are Protestant congregations that generally share certain characteristics:

- 2000 or more persons in attendance at weekly worship, counting adults and children at all worship locations.
- A charismatic, authoritative senior minister
- A very active 7 day a week congregational community
- A multitude of diverse social and outreach ministries
- An intentional small group system or other structures of intimacy and accountability
- Innovative and often contemporary worship format and a complex differentiated organizational structure

When the researcher selected churches in New York State she got a list of 41 and then added 9 churches she has attended in New York State, that were not included in the list, to get a pool of 50 churches to e-mail. A flyer was attached to the e-mail for distribution to congregants that explained what the survey was about and provided the link to take the survey.

The researcher chose to utilize megachurches because the high number of attendees offered access to more women and potential participants. It can often take a large sample to get adequate results based on the completion rate, so there is a need for a larger pool to make up for a low return rate that can occur when utilizing surveys.

The listed churches represent various denominations, which is good because the researcher wanted denominational diversity in the study. Some of the churches’ information was outdated, so some emails were undeliverable. The researcher was able to send emails out to thirty-eight of the fifty churches. The researcher also emailed Christian women in the researcher’s network who she had previously attended church with but did not have a Facebook page and asked those women to share it with other women who might be interested in taking the survey. Some women did indicate to the researcher that they shared either the Facebook page post or the email with other women.

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Since the survey was anonymous, the researcher did not know which of the means of advertising the survey link produced more participants. However, because each method involved utilizing the researcher’s network and surrounding area, it was still a network and convenience sample. Of the forty-three who responded to the survey, six did not complete it, and their responses were excluded from the research. Twenty of the thirty-seven remaining surveys were from women who had been mentored in the church for the purpose of discipleship and seventeen that had not. The researcher stopped collecting responses when the data reached a point of saturation. This occurred when no new information was being observed that would impact the data being reported. The researcher determined this by reviewing the responses already collected and noticed that the responses were becoming repetitive and new results were not adding any significant differences to the research findings.

During the review of literature, the researcher took note of a qualitative study conducted on female medical students regarding their mentoring experiences in their third and fourth years of medical school. There were forty-eight participants, and the purpose of that study was to explore the role gender played in female medical students’ mentoring experiences. The study used a smaller sample size but was able to gather significant results. The study indicated gender plays a significant role in the female students’ expectations and experiences with mentoring, and it also indicated that gender may play a role in influencing female medical students’ decisions surrounding their career planning.91 The researcher used the above research study with a similar topic as a guide to substantiate that a sample size of over thirty and under fifty participants for a qualitative study would be sufficient to provide valuable and substantial research findings.

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Research Instrument

The researcher chose to use a web-based survey created through Survey Monkey, which is an online, cloud-based survey company that provides free, customizable surveys, as well as paid programs that include data analysis, sample selection, bias elimination, and data representation tools. This instrument was chosen because the researcher wanted to survey those who were connected to the researcher through social media and through local congregations in the researcher’s surrounding area of New York. The researcher wanted to keep the survey anonymous and accessible. It was important for the researcher to collect data from people who were in her network and region because this is the population of people the researcher desires to understand and impact based on research findings from this project.

Due to the researcher having mentored women previously and being connected to them through social media, it is possible that there were women who participated in the survey that were mentored by researcher. The researcher wanted to gain insight from both women she has mentored and women she has not mentored. The researcher did not ask respondents to indicate whether they have been mentored by the researcher. The researcher wanted to keep the survey anonymous to minimize social desirability bias in case participants knew the researcher. Social desirability bias is when respondents answer in a way to be more socially acceptable rather than providing a more truthful answer.92 “It is often assumed that social desirability bias reduces the validity of much survey research, meaning the respondents may answer questions to reflect what they think is socially appropriate rather than what they really believe or do.”93


Conducting face-to-face interviews might have caused participants to change their natural responses in order to please the researcher, and this would have skewed the results. Using a web-based survey that was anonymous allowed for the researcher to ask open- and closed-ended questions and provided a convenient and anonymous way to collect survey responses. It enabled the researcher to send a link to the survey through social media, specifically Facebook, and by e-mail to women in her network that did not have Facebook, and to local congregations within her state. The researcher did not know if participants were mentored by the researcher or not, so this would also eliminate potential researcher bias if she had mentored any respondents. This researcher wanted honest answers so that the data collected could be utilized to help women the researcher mentors in the future or to assist others who are mentoring women. The research would provide insights gained from the results that could shed light on how women view mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes.

Another advantage to using a web-based survey is the advantage of having a program to collect, store and assist in analyzing the data. The survey results were only accessible to the researcher with unique login credentials, and results were stored in one place. The researcher was able to design the survey online and use features included in the software that allowed participants to skip questions that were not relevant to them. For example, if participants indicated they have been mentored, then they continued in sequence; but if participants indicated they have not been mentored, then they were skipped to the next set of questions relevant to those who have not been mentored. The survey was designed to provide different paths dependent on answer choices. This minimized confusion for participants. “Web page questionnaires, as well as supporting complex
question-skipping logic, can involve randomizations of question order and other features not possible with paper questionnaires or most e-mail surveys. These features assure better data.”

**Development of Survey Questions**

The researcher developed survey questions based on the research conducted in the literature review and personal experience mentoring and discipling others. The survey was standardized, so the questions were the same for everyone who took it dependent on whether participants were previously mentored or not. After creating questions for the survey, the researcher submitted the survey to her thesis project mentor for review.

Based on feedback from the thesis mentor, minor adjustments were to increase clarity. After making corrections to the survey, the researcher’s thesis mentor approved the survey to be submitted to Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board for approval to conduct research with human subjects. The IRB provided the researcher with a revision that needed to be made to one question on the survey to ensure that the researcher was asking the right question to obtain the information researcher was attempting to collect. The researcher reworded that question and then received approval from the IRB. This assisted in minimizing potential for any questions to be unclear or not capture what was intended. This could skew the results because the question would not be answered accurately if it was not asked correctly. Having the survey questions and answers documented as inputted by the participants ensured their responses were recorded as they submitted them, thus capturing their perceptions and experiences. Each person’s responses were valid since she was describing her own thoughts, views and experiences.

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Consistency

Since the researcher used a web-based survey to collect data and responses from participants, she did not have to record interviews or transcribe interviews which could have left room for error in transcription. The answers were typed by respondents, so there was not any difficulty reading handwriting; this allowed for better chance of identifying themes accurately because responses were recorded as they were inputted into Survey Monkey. Qualitative studies are not as much about reproducing the same results as they are about being consistent in the analysis of the data to report findings accurately. This is because qualitative studies are subjective in nature, and people’s views and responses can change over time, meaning there might be different results if the same survey were given to the same people at a different point in time. This does not make the survey results inconsistent, but it takes into account the fact that people’s experiences, perceptions, thoughts and behaviors can change. It is how the data is collected and then analyzed that determines if it is reliable.

Data Organization Techniques

The researcher used the online platform Survey Monkey to create the survey and to administer it to participants. The results were stored through the online platform and automatically organized by the software in order of the questions asked and responses provided by each respondent. Responses were organized in charts for closed-ended responses and text boxes for open-ended responses. The results were then exported to an Excel spreadsheet and to Adobe Reader as a PDF for ease of reading and viewing. These documents were then saved to the researcher’s password-protected computer for in depth analysis of the data. The researcher reviewed responses and identified patterns and commonality amongst open-ended responses. After the identification of
patterns, the open-ended responses were coded and manipulated in order to make results meaningful and significant for analysis.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

After the data was exported to an Excel spreadsheet, the researcher was able to look at all the data in one document and see responses as inputted by the respondents. The researcher first reviewed the responses to the demographic information to gain some insight into the background of participants. Then the researcher looked at key words and sentiments in open-ended results to determine what was similar and different between responses. The researcher then created an additional column in the spreadsheet to input key words and phrases next to each open-ended response. After doing this, the researcher was able to group similarities and differences and then code responses into themes. The researcher first coded responses from participants who had been mentored and then responses from participants who had not been mentored. The researcher then went back through all the responses to make certain coding was consistent for responses throughout the survey for those who had been mentored and those who had not to prepare for further analysis.

**Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology that was utilized in this research study. The researcher elected to use a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the views and attitudes that women have towards mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes. The researcher stated why other types of research methods were not utilized. The population used for the study was also indicated, which was Christian women between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five. An explanation was offered as to why this particular population was utilized. The researcher also indicated that open- and closed-ended questions were included on a web-based survey. Survey Monkey was used to administer the survey and store data collected. The
survey had one of two paths that participants could follow based on whether they had been mentored in the church for discipleship purposes previously. The researcher also provided an explanation as to why this instrument was viewed as the best option for this particular research study.

The researcher also disclosed that participants may have been mentored by researcher, but that there was no way for the researcher to know this because the surveys were anonymous. To gain access to participants, the researcher utilized a personal Facebook page to post an invitation to participate in the survey, and she also sent an individual e-mail to the pastors of 38 megachurches in New York state to invite them to share the opportunity to participate in the survey with their female congregants. The researcher also e-mailed potential participants in her network who were not on Facebook. The researcher did not have to transcribe any of the responses since responses were recorded as typed by participants. After the data was collected and organized, incomplete surveys were removed from results and the data was coded using patterns and themes to prepare for proper analysis of the data. The next chapter will present the data that was collected, discuss the research findings, and identify themes that surfaced through analysis of the data.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter is dedicated to reporting the research findings based on the survey results from participants. The researcher obtained demographic information at the beginning of the survey to gather some background information from the respondents. This information will not be used to determine any correlations between these variables, since it is a qualitative study. The purpose of this research was to identify and understand respondents’ individual thoughts and attitudes towards women mentoring women in the church for discipleship purposes. The following sections will present the findings in a significant and meaningful way.

Demographic Information

Gender of Respondents

Although the survey was intended for only women to participate in, the question on gender was asked to exclude any male participants who may have accidentally taken the survey. The graph below confirms that only female participants completed the survey.

What is your gender?

Figure 1. Gender of Respondents
Age of Respondents

The age requirement for survey respondents to participate was from 18 to 65. The researcher set this age restriction to focus on mentoring amongst the adult and working age population as set forth by the Social Security Administration. Participants were asked to identify their ages within the ranges of 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 55-65. There were respondents from each range, but the largest portion of the respondents were between ages 35-44.

![What is your age?](image)

Figure 2. Age of Respondents

Marital Status

Respondents were asked to indicate their marital status. It is interesting that respondents in this survey were split almost evenly between married and single status, with married women at

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48.65 percent and single women at 45.95 percent. The remaining respondents reported being divorced. There were no respondents that indicated being widowed or separated.

**What is your marital status?**

![Bar chart showing marital status distribution](image)

**Figure 3. Marital Status of Respondents**

**Daily Activity**

Among all respondents, over 50 percent work full time, while just slightly over 16 percent work part-time, so just over 66 percent of respondents reported working as their daily activity. Slightly over 10 percent of respondents are full time caretakers in the home. Just over 8 percent of respondents reported their daily activity as being a full-time student. The same percentage indicated they are retired. The remaining respondents, representing just under 3 percent for each category,
were those temporarily unemployed but seeking employment and those permanently unemployed (whether due to health or having independent financial means).

Figure 4. Daily Activity of Respondents
Education Level

There were various levels of education completed amongst participants as indicated in the graph below. There were 45.95 percent of respondents that obtained a Graduate degree. The second highest response, comprising 32 percent of respondents, have obtained a Bachelor’s degree. Slightly over 8 percent of respondents have obtained an Associate’s degree, and the remaining 13.51 percent have had some college but have not obtained a degree.

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Figure 5. Highest Level of Education of Respondents
**Church Denomination**

Respondents for this survey came from a variety of church denominations, but 48.65 percent of respondents identified as being from a non-denominational church. 10.81 percent of respondents identified as being from the Church of the Nazarene. The next highest denomination, 8.11 percent of respondents, was the Apostolic denomination. Then there were those that indicated being Baptist or Pentecostal, with each representing 5.41 percent of respondents. The remaining respondents indicated either Charismatic, Catholic, Protestant, Methodist, or Wesleyan as their church denomination. Each of these denominations represented 2.70 percent of respondents.

![What is your church denomination?](image-url)

*Figure 6. Church Denomination of Respondents*
Mentoring Relationship Experience

The question of having entered into a mentoring relationship in the church for discipleship purposes was important to this research. Asking whether respondents ever entered into a mentoring relationship with a mentor within the church for the purpose of discipleship provided awareness of which women have been mentored and which have not. The response to this question also determined which sequence of questions each respondent followed for the rest of the survey. One set of questions was based on having been mentored, and the other set of questions on not having been mentored. The results indicated 54.05 percent of respondents have been mentored in the church for discipleship purposes, and 45.95 percent of respondents have not.

Have you ever entered into a mentoring relationship WITH a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes?

![Figure 7. Mentoring Experience of Respondents](image-url)
Most of those who had been mentored met their mentors in the church, while others met their mentor either through school, an online search, or an internship placement. Eighty-five percent of these mentees were mentored by another female, 5 percent were mentored by a male, and 10 percent were mentored by both. However, when asked if they had a preference of whether a female or a male mentored them, 50 percent said they preferred a female and 50 percent indicated no preference. Seventy-five percent of mentees indicated that their mentor was in a leadership position within the church, while 25 percent indicated their mentor was not in a leadership position in the church. Mentees indicated their mentors were in various types of leadership positions, such as Worship Leader, Administrator, Director of Spiritual Formation, and President of Women’s ministry. The researcher observed there were no mentors that held the leadership position of pastor. This may be due to the lack of female pastors in the church or to male pastors not wanting to mentor female mentees, as suggested in the literature review section. These results show that having a mentor in a leadership position was more common than not, but it also indicated that a mentor does not have to be in a leadership position in the church to mentor someone. (See fig. 8.)

Did you have a preference of whether your mentor was male or female?

![Figure 8. Mentor Gender Preference of Mentored Respondents](image-url)
Of those respondents who had not been mentored in the church for discipleship purposes, 52.94 percent indicated they would have liked to have been mentored, while 41.18 percent stated they never thought about being mentored in the church for discipleship purposes. The remaining 5.88 percent stated they never wanted to be mentored in the church for discipleship purposes. Of those respondents who indicated they would have liked to have been mentored, 77.78 percent said they preferred a female, and 22.22 percent indicated they had no preference. When asked if they could turn back time and attempt to enter into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes, 35 of the respondents indicated yes. There were only two respondents that indicated no. One respondent said no because she believed she would not have been ready or committed to mentoring at the time. The other respondent believed she would have chosen the wrong fit for a mentor at that time in her life.

Would you have preferred a male or female mentor, or no preference?

![Figure 9. Mentor Gender Preference of Non-Mentored Respondents](chart.png)
General Attitude and Views Towards Mentoring

The objective of this research project was to identify what views and attitudes women hold towards mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes. This is the main research question, and the other question is whether there are any barriers to women entering mentoring relationships for discipleship purposes in the church. Those who had been mentored and those who had not were asked to describe their views and attitudes towards entering a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes, and several themes appeared throughout the responses for both groups of respondents. In this section, the researcher will present these themes and include examples of them from participants’ responses.

Positive View

The first theme amongst the women who had been mentored was that respondents viewed mentoring as beneficial and necessary. One respondent said, “I absolutely love it. I would argue that any person within the Christian community should have a mentor at some point during their walk.” Another respondent expressed a similar sentiment, saying, “I love it, it’s so great to have someone with more experience and knowledge to learn from and exchange ideas and information without judgment.” Words like “important” and “critical” were also used by respondents to express how they view mentoring in the church for the purpose of discipleship.

The women who had not been mentored also had a positive view of a mentoring for discipleship. These respondents used such phrases as “a great idea,” and “great benefits,” and words like “valuable.” Although they had not participated in a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes, they viewed it as something positive.
Guidance and Growth

Several respondents expressed that mentoring is needed in the church to guide believers in their faith and to help them grow. One respondent indicated that having a mentor in her life was pivotal and that she would not be where she is in her walk with Christ if it were not for her mentor. Another respondent stated, “I reached a point in my walk with God where I had come as far as I could go. I needed different results, and I knew I needed someone who was a little further down the road than me.” Several women stated they believe that having an older, more mature person in the church to mentor and guide someone through her spiritual walk is important, especially for new believers.

The majority of respondents who were mentored indicated that being mentored in the church helped increase their practice of spiritual disciplines, including praying, scripture reading, fasting, and journaling. Several respondents indicated that being mentored helped improve their intimacy with Jesus. Sixty percent of respondents also indicated some light was shed on their life purpose by engaging in a mentoring relationship. Only one respondent indicated that she did not experience improved spiritual development as a result of mentoring.

Those women who had not been mentored also indicated that mentoring for discipleship is needed in the church. Respondents indicated that it is “vital for Christian living” and “needed to progress in purpose.” One respondent stated, “I think it is vital but very difficult to find people willing.” These respondents indicated that they believe being mentored for discipleship purposes would have helped them grow deeper in their Christian walk and to mature spiritually because they would have had guidance and encouragement. One respondent stated she “would have been stronger and further in purpose.” Another respondent said she would have “increased in knowledge/teaching on Christian faith.” One hundred percent of these respondents indicated they
think having a mentor would have made a difference in their spiritual development up until this point in their Christian walk.

**Dealing with Challenges**

During the Christian journey, believers experience ups and downs. There are times when challenges arise that need to be handled in positive ways. One hundred percent of respondents who have been mentored indicated that having a mentor helped them to deal with challenges they faced as disciples of Christ. One area where respondents indicated they had challenges was with relationships, including marital issues and relational issues with other Christians and non-believers. One respondent stated, “A few times she’s been a sounding board for how I am or how I should deal with relationships with both brothers and sisters in Christ and also non-believers.” Another respondent indicated her mentor helped her make a decision involving someone of the opposite sex.

Having doubts in the Christian walk can be challenging because when a person has doubts, she is not able to exercise faith fully or believe truths that God may be calling her to believe about herself or Him. One respondent reported that being mentored “helped me wrestle with doubts, fears and anxieties.” Another respondent indicated that it helped answer the doubts she had. Respondents also reported having difficulty staying grounded in their faith, and their mentors helped them with this challenge. One respondent stated, “With the help of my mentor, I was able to stay on the narrow path.” Another respondent indicated that being mentored “challenged me to have a strong mind and learn to be open minded as well as staying grounded as a person.”

One-hundred percent of those women that had not been mentored previously but would have liked to have been indicated they believe a mentor would have helped them deal with challenges they faced as a disciple of Christ. One respondent stated, “Being able to call on a more mature saint when issues arose or when you were unsure about your faith would have been
amazing.” Some respondents indicated they believed a mentor would have held them accountable in their faith walk. A respondent expressed that she believes a mentor would have helped her to deal with parenting and marital issues as well as theological issues she had. Another respondent believes she would have been stretched in her faith.

**Overall Impact of Mentoring on Discipleship**

Respondents were asked to describe the overall impact being mentored had on their discipleship process. Respondents who have been mentored reported that being mentored made them more serious about their faith and better disciples of Christ. Several women mentioned they grew spiritually and matured in their faith as a result of having been mentored. One respondent wrote concerning her experience, “It made me stronger in Christ. It also made me realize that the Holy Spirit moves within a conversation so plainly. That we really need Him to discern His word and will for our lives.” Phrases like “better disciple,” “more spiritually mature,” and “helped me develop” were common in the responses. Some women indicated that they became more authentic towards God and themselves. They started being more honest with themselves and God as a result of having been mentored. A couple of respondents indicated that being mentored encouraged them to become mentors and disciple others. There were several common themes in terms of what mentors did or provided that contributed to mentees growing spiritually in their mentoring relationships. These themes will be discussed below.

**Role-Modeling**

The first common theme respondents indicated assisted them in their spiritual growth was their mentors being role-models. Several respondents indicated that role-modeling played a big part in their discipleship. One respondent stated it was “by example, the spiritual life she lives” that her
mentor stimulated her to grow spiritually. For many of the mentees, seeing their mentor live out their Christian faith was one of the most helpful experiences in their Christian walk.

**Encouragement**

Providing encouragement was another common element of respondents’ descriptions of how their mentors assisted in their spiritual growth. Respondents were encouraged when they doubted themselves or experienced challenges in their lives. They were also encouraged to become mature in Christ, practice spiritual disciplines, to be honest with God and themselves, and to remember God’s truth. One respondent stated her mentor “always supported me and reminded me to study my bible, pray and stay grounded with the Lord.” Respondents likewise stated that they were “motivated,” by their mentors.

**Challenging and Asking Questions**

Several respondents also indicated that their mentor asked questions to challenge their faith and to increase self-awareness and their awareness of God. As one respondent wrote, “She challenged me by asking questions about what I was experiencing at the time. She encouraged me and motivated me, and I felt like our encounters were ordained. It is as if Abba God was speaking to me through her.” Another respondent stated, “I was met with challenges and also new insight each time we met, which increased my desire to want to grow beyond what I knew previously.”

**Barriers to Mentoring**

Respondents were asked to indicate if they had experienced any barriers to entering a mentoring relationship in the church for discipleship purposes. Both those who have been mentored and those who have not reported experiencing barriers to entering a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes. Some of the barriers indicated were similar amongst these two categories of respondents and some barriers were different. These barriers will be discussed below. The barriers
amongst those who have been mentored will be presented first, then those recognized by women who have not been mentored will be presented.

**Fear of Intimacy and Vulnerability**

Several of those women who had been mentored for discipleship purposes indicated that they were their own barrier to entering into a mentoring relationship because they had walls up. The fear of being vulnerable and intimate with another person prevented some from seeking a mentor. Even some women who knew their mentors before entering into a mentoring relationship still felt afraid to open themselves up and share certain information with them. One respondent stated, “Any barriers I had to overcome would be to not have my wall up so high and be more open to change.” These respondents were aware that that they should not share private details with just anybody, but they felt uncomfortable with the thought of being vulnerable even with a mentor.

**Inability to Trust**

Trust was another barrier to entering a mentoring relationship for those respondents who have been mentored. Trust is something needed in any relationship, although there can be different levels of trust. In a mentoring relationship, the mentee has to believe that the mentor has her best interest at heart and that the mentor is a safe person with whom to share intimate details of her life. One respondent stated, “I realize I had barriers in the area of communication, being vulnerable and also there was a level of trust that I didn't have as well.” Vulnerability and trust go hand in hand, and if there is a fear of vulnerability, there is usually a lack of trust that comes with it. Another respondent said, “Trust factor was a barrier at times. Even though I knew my mentor ahead of time my own insecurities prohibited me from being me.”
Feelings of Shame

Another barrier to entering a mentoring relationship identified by respondents who have been mentored is shame. Some women hesitated to share negative experiences they have had for fear that their mentors would view them differently if they shared details from their past that they considered shameful. Shame can prevent a person from being able to open up and be honest with another person, but that honesty is needed in any healthy relationship, especially a mentoring one.

The women who had not been mentored but would like to have been identified three common barriers that had prevented them from seeking a mentoring relationship. These themes are indicated below.

Lack of Availability

The first common barrier amongst those who had not been mentored for discipleship purposes was that mentors were not available. Some respondents indicated that no one was available to mentor them, and one respondent stated she was not aware this was something that could even be done because it was not stated in her church. This respondent did not know this was an option available to her. Another respondent indicated that there was a lack of available mentors for her because she did not have a Bible-believing community in which she could find a mentor.

Trusting a Mentor

Trust is another common barrier for those women who have not been mentored for discipleship purposes. One respondent stated, “For me it is trust, people can be fickle, and you have to be careful who is feeding you information. This is why I study and check for myself to ensure the information is accurate.” The other side to this is trusting a mentor with the information you share with her. Another respondent stated that confidentiality was a barrier to her entering a mentoring relationship. Confidentiality is very important for a healthy mentoring relationship. If women do
not trust that the private information shared with a mentor will be held in confidence, they can
definitely be turned off to the idea of being mentored.

**Lack of Commitment**

Lack of commitment was the last common barrier amongst the respondents who had not
been mentored for discipleship purposes. Respondents indicated they were not ready to commit to
mentoring for various reasons. A common reason was due to the investment of time that the
mentoring relationship requires. Another reason for the lack of commitment was not being
motivated or having the capacity to be mentored. Mentoring takes a full commitment from mentee
and mentor to work and be transformative. If women are not ready to commit to the process or do
not have the time, then they can be hesitant to enter into a mentoring relationship.

**Mentoring Others**

The researcher asked whether those who have mentored others have been mentored
themselves and whether those who have not been mentored would be willing to mentor someone
else for discipleship purposes in the church. The results are indicated below.

**Mentee and Mentor**

Of the 54.05 percent of respondents who had been mentored for discipleship purposes, 50
percent have mentored someone else, and 50 percent have not. There were three reasons that
emerged as to what influenced the 50 percent of respondents who mentored someone else to do so.
The first reason was because the Great Commission calls believers to make disciples and mentoring
someone in the church for the purpose of discipleship fulfills the Great Commission. One
respondent stated, “Making disciples who make disciples- my life-purpose- if we don’t pour into
others, how will they know what to do and how to help others know Jesus and make him known?”
Another respondent referenced as her motivation Jesus’ command to “go and make disciples of all
nations.” The second reason was that those who had been mentored wanted to give to someone else what had been given to them. They received mentoring and, as a result, wanted to then mentor someone else. One respondent said, “I had a desire to return the same restoration that had taken place with me to someone else that was willing to receive mentoring.” The last reason was that the respondents were asked to be mentors. In one situation, a pastor asked the respondent to mentor someone; and in another situation, the respondent was asked by the prospective mentee. (See fig. 10.)

![Figure 10. Respondents Who Were Mentored: Mentored Others or Not](image-url)

Have you ever entered into a mentoring relationship AS a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes?

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
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Figure 10. Respondents Who Were Mentored: Mentored Others or Not
Not a Mentee but a Mentor

Of the 45.95 percent of women who were not mentored for discipleship purposes, 17.65 percent have mentored someone else, and 82.35 percent have not. The common reason the 17.65 percent of respondents chose to mentor someone else was that they believed mentoring is something that can help others to grow spiritually and is foundational to discipleship. It was interesting to note that although these respondents have not been mentored for discipleship purposes, they were willing to help others by offering something they themselves had not received. (See fig. 11.)

Have you ever entered into a mentoring relationship AS a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes?

Figure 11. Respondents Who Were Not Mentored: Mentored Others or Not
Mentee but not a Mentor

Of the 54.05 percent of women who were mentored but have not mentored someone else, half said they would be willing to mentor someone else in the church. Forty percent of respondents who had been mentored for discipleship purposes said they were not willing to mentor someone else in the church. One respondent stated she was not sure, so she did not indicate yes or no, which is why there is 10 percent discrepancy in the results. (See fig. 12.) This respondent did, however, state that perhaps in the future she may be willing to mentor someone else. Of the 50 percent of respondents willing to mentor others for discipleship purposes, 50 percent indicated that they would prefer to mentor a female, while 50 percent indicated they would have no preference for the gender of the mentee. (See fig. 13.)

Would you be willing to mentor a mentee within the church for the purpose of discipleship?

![Figure 12. Respondents Who Were Mentored: Willingness to Mentor Others or Not](image-url)
Would you be open to mentoring a male or female mentee?

Figure 13. Respondents Who Were Mentored: Gender Preference of Potential Mentee
Not a Mentee and not a Mentor

Of the 45.95 percent of respondents who have not been mentored for discipleship purposes, 82.35 percent of these respondents have not mentored someone else in the church either. Out of the 82.35 percent, fifty percent of participants said they would be willing to mentor someone else in the church. The remaining 50 percent of respondents said they were not willing to mentor someone else in the church for discipleship purposes. (See fig. 14.) Of the 50 percent of respondents who said they were willing to mentor others for discipleship purposes, 85.71 percent indicated that they would prefer to mentor a female, and 14.29 percent indicated they would have no preference for the gender of the mentee. (See fig. 15.)

Figure 14. Respondents Who Were Not Mentored: Willingness to Mentor Others or Not
Figure 15. Respondents Who Were Not Mentored: Gender Preference of Potential Mentee
The reasons respondents were willing to mentor someone else in the church for discipleship purposes were the same amongst those women who had been mentored and those women who had not. The first reason was that these respondents believe women mentoring women is biblical. One respondent stated, “The bible tells older women to teach the younger women.” The other reason was that mature women can guide and support others. Respondents also believe women with a strong foundation can mentor someone who needs spiritual support and guidance and that this relationship can be beneficial for both mentee and mentor.

The reasons respondents indicated for not being willing to mentor someone else in the church for discipleship purposes was the same for those who had been mentored and those who had not. There were three reasons that surfaced. The first was that some respondents did not feel ready to take on that type of role yet. The second was that some respondents felt they were not equipped or qualified to mentor someone else. The third common reason was that respondents did not feel comfortable with the Scriptures because they are not well versed in it.

**Recommendations for Mentoring**

Respondents that have been mentored and/or have mentored others were asked if they would recommend that other women enter a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes. One hundred percent of these women indicated they would recommend that other women enter into mentoring relationships within the church. (See fig. 16.) There were three common reasons as to why they would recommend other women do this. The first was that that it fulfills the Great Commission. The second reason was that mentoring is needed for spiritual growth and having a mentor as a role-model is vital to discipleship. The last reason was that mentoring is a great gift to those in the church.
Would you recommend other women to enter into a mentoring relationship within the church for the purpose of discipleship based on your mentoring experience?

![Bar chart showing recommendation for mentoring from mentored respondents.]

**Figure 16. Recommendation for Mentoring from Mentored Respondents**

Of those women who were not mentored but mentored someone else, 100 percent indicated they would recommend other women enter into a mentoring relationship within the church for discipleship purposes. (See fig. 17.) The same percentage of respondents in both categories support entering a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes. These respondents indicated they would be willing to do this because mentoring is something that can help others to grow spiritually and is foundational to discipleship.
Would you recommend other women within the church to establish a mentoring relationship within the church for the purpose of discipleship based on your mentoring experience?

Figure 17. Recommendation for Mentoring from Non-Mentored Respondents

Summary

The researcher conducted this research project to understand the views and attitudes of women towards mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes. The research findings provided insight into how women view and feel towards entering mentoring relationships. The researcher was surprised to see that over 50 percent of the respondents had been mentored for the purpose of discipleship. The researcher expected this percentage to be lower and the number of
respondents indicating they had not been mentored for discipleship purposes to be higher based on findings in the literature review that mentoring is not a primary method used for discipleship in churches. However, 45.95 percent of respondents indicated they have not been mentored in the church for discipleship purposes. This is still a high number, given the benefits of such a mentoring relationship as presented in the literature review as well as the research findings from this project.

It also surprised the researcher that out of the 54.05 percent of respondents who had received mentoring, half went on to mentor someone else for discipleship purposes. She expected this number to be much lower based on the assumption that there is a lack of women mentoring women in the church for the purpose of discipleship. It still holds true that a significant percentage of women are not being mentored for discipleship purposes in the church, but on a positive note, half the respondents who have received mentoring became a mentor for others. By doing this, they increased the number of mentors available to provide this type of mentoring in the church.

The women who have been mentored for discipleship purposes in the church and women who have not been mentored for discipleship purposes in the church both have a positive view towards this kind of mentoring. Respondents expressed that mentoring for discipleship purposes is a good idea, needed, and important for the growth of disciples of Christ. Those who had been mentored discussed the benefits, reporting they matured spiritually and were able to face challenges in their faith better because they had someone to support, guide, and encourage them through the challenges. Such positive views and attitudes towards mentoring for discipleship purposes raises the question as to why nearly 50 percent of respondents had not experienced mentoring in the church for discipleship purposes. The barriers respondents faced to entering a mentoring relationship provided an answer as to why such a large number of respondents may not be entering into this type of relationship.
The barrier of having a lack of mentors in the church available to mentor some respondents for discipleship purposes was an issue. Respondents stated it was challenging finding someone to mentor them. One respondent stated she did not know mentoring for discipleship purposes was even available because her church never talked about it or offered the opportunity. The researcher expected this to be a barrier to entering into this kind of mentoring relationship in the church.

Respondents also indicated a lack of trust, fear of intimacy, and vulnerability were barriers to entering into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes. These are internal reasons for not entering this type of mentoring relationship, whereas the lack of available mentors is an external reason. Several respondents indicated they had walls up and did not want to open up with a mentor about their personal lives and negative behaviors. Respondents feared being judged and feeling a sense of shame because of past mistakes or sensitive details about their lives. The researcher did not expect that issues regarding trust, intimacy, and vulnerability would have been barriers to entering mentoring relationships. This was not something the researcher considered, and she found the responses helpful in understanding how women view entering into a mentoring relationship.

The other barrier to entering a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes was the lack of willingness to commit to the mentoring relationship and the process of being mentored. The researcher assumed there would be a lack of commitment due to time constraints, but only one individual expressed this as the reason for her lack of commitment. The other respondents indicated they just were not ready to be mentored and were, therefore, not willing to enter into a mentoring relationship. This was an unexpected barrier to the researcher as well, because the researcher did not consider the possibility of an internal struggle between a recognition of the need to grow spiritually and as a disciple of Christ and the desire to grow spiritually and as a disciple of Christ. If believers do not want to grow and are unwilling to submit to the process of discipleship, the
mentoring relationship will not be effective or transformative. This gave the researcher something to think about. In the next chapter, the researcher will suggest opportunities for further study based on the research finding and areas the researcher was not able to cover in this project.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The researcher gained a lot of insight into how women view and feel about mentoring one another for the purpose of discipleship. The results provided answers to the research questions, but participant responses also created new questions that could not be addressed in this research project. The researcher will suggest areas for further study. She will also share the impact this research had on her and how she will use this research in her ministry moving forward.

Insights and Further Study

No Gender Preference

Eighty-five percent of respondents who had been mentored for discipleship purposes were mentored by women. Five percent were mentored by men, and 10 percent were mentored by both men and women. The researcher did not find it surprising that the majority of mentored women had been mentored by women, but what was surprising was that, out of all the women who had been mentored, only 50 percent had a preference of having a woman as a mentor. The other respondents had no preference. However, amongst those who had not been mentored previously in the church for discipleship purposes but would have liked to have been, a little over 77 percent indicated they would have preferred a woman mentor them, and only a little over 22 percent had no preference.

The researcher does not know why there is a vast difference in preference for a woman mentor amongst those respondents who have been mentored versus those who have not. The researcher would have expected a higher preference for women mentors amongst those who had been mentored, but the preference for a woman mentor was higher amongst those respondents who had not been mentored. This did not surprise the researcher because women generally connect better with women and feel more comfortable sharing intimate details with someone of the same gender.
Further study to determine why half of respondents who had been mentored for discipleship purposes in the church did not have a preference for the gender of their mentor would provide insight into this. Qualitative research could be done with a larger sample size of women who had been mentored to see if the results remain consistent. It would be interesting to survey an equal number of female respondents who have been mentored by a woman only, a man only, and both, and ask if they had a preference when entering into their first mentoring relationship and if their preference changed after this experience. Asking the respondents to describe their responses in-depth could provide insight as to why there is or is not a preference for a certain gender mentor. An interview may be a better research method in this case.

No Pastoral Mentors

The researcher found it interesting that a majority of the women who had been mentored, were mentored by individuals in a leadership position but there were some respondents who were mentored by those not in leadership positions. The researcher viewed this positively because as stated in the literature review, a woman does not have to have a leadership position. The positive aspect of this is that many of these women went on to be in leadership roles by becoming mentors because of the influence their leaders had on them in the mentoring relationship.

This researcher did, however, notice that none of the women mentors in leadership positions were pastors. The researcher expected the results to indicate that at least one mentee was mentored by a woman pastor. These findings do suggest either there is a lack of women pastors in these respondents’ churches or that the women pastors were not available to mentor others for discipleship purposes. Further study would need to be conducted to identify the reason(s) none of the respondents were mentored by a woman pastor.
It would also be beneficial to explore why there were no women mentored by male pastors, especially if 50 percent of respondents indicated they had no preference in the gender of their mentor. This is significant because pastors are responsible for making disciples just as any other Christ follower is, but they have been given a greater charge to shepherd those in their congregations. Part of shepherding is discipleship, and there are several ways to disciple others, but mentoring is one of the best methods of discipleship. An example of this is Paul mentoring Timothy and helping him to mature in the faith so that Timothy could go on to pastor others as Paul was doing.

Although Paul was an Apostle, he was pastoral as well. He was not able to mentor everyone in the capacity he mentored Timothy, but he was led by the Holy Spirit to pour into certain individuals more than others to prepare them to be leaders in the body of Christ. A question the researcher holds is, are our pastors still doing what Paul did with Timothy today, or are they delegating this to others to do? Are male pastors mentoring men for discipleship purposes and to prepare them for leadership roles but neglecting to do this for women? Something else to consider is, are women in the church even desiring to be in leadership positions, including that of pastor? If they are, who is discipling them and training them to prepare for this level of leadership and responsibility? These are all questions to consider for further study.

**Fear of Mentoring**

Another area for further study is determining why some women are fearful of intimacy and vulnerability and trusting someone to mentor them in the church for discipleship purposes. Effective mentoring hinges on trusting someone enough to be open and vulnerable with them so there can be growth and healing. Being able to be open and held accountable to a mentor is part of the spiritual growth process. The Scriptures state believers must confess their sins one to another
and that they are to bear one another’s burdens. This requires being vulnerable and willing to share intimate parts of oneself with someone else. Granted, this is not something that a mentee should be expected to do with just anyone. Using wisdom and being prayerful and discerning are necessary in determining the right fit for a mentoring relationship.

With this all being said, the researcher sees an opportunity for further study to determine where this fear of vulnerability and intimacy and this lack of trust amongst these women is stemming from. Is the fear coming from personal experiences outside of the church where these respondents were vulnerable and had a negative experience as a result? Was trust broken at some point in their lives that led them not to want to be vulnerable again? Did these respondents encounter a negative experience in church that led them to fear being vulnerable with others in the church and trusting them with such intimate details about themselves? The researcher has encountered women from various churches who have stated their trust was violated in the church by others sharing their personal information, that had been shared in confidence. This was very damaging for these women, and many of them put up walls with other believers and were not able to develop healthy relationships with others as a result, including one with a mentor.

If a woman’s trust is violated--especially in the church, which is supposed to be a safe place--then this could be reason enough to prevent her from entering a mentoring relationship in the church for discipleship purposes. Whether these women’s negative experiences with being vulnerable in their personal lives occurred outside of the church or inside the church would impact how this issue should be addressed. Further research into the reasons some women fear being vulnerable and intimate and trusting someone to mentor them in the church for discipleship purposes could help to identify the root cause and provide direction for how to help them overcome these fears.
Correlational Study

The researcher used a smaller sample size that was not representative of the population in the study. Since this was a qualitative study, not quantitative, the researcher was not able to determine any correlational relationships amongst the different variables presented in the research, including the demographics obtained to gather background information or to make generalizations from the research findings about the population at large. Further study could be done using a quantitative method to determine any correlational relationships amongst the data and to identify any patterns that could be representational of the population at large. For example, did the age or denomination of women respondents impact their views and attitudes towards mentoring one another for discipleship purposes? Did age and denomination impact gender preference for a mentor or impact their openness to being mentored or becoming a mentor themselves? Did the highest level of education have an impact on whether respondents were willing to mentor someone else for discipleship purposes? These are questions that could not be answered in this project, but further research could bring valuable insight into what factors correlate to how women view and feel about mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes.

Commitment to Mentoring

One of the barriers to respondents entering a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes was that respondents who had not previously been mentored were not ready to be mentored in this capacity. This was not something the researcher expected to be a barrier because, as the research findings suggested overall, women view entering into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes as good and beneficial. The researcher realized that this does not mean that these same women were ready spiritually and psychologically for a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes. Another barrier that respondents indicated to entering a mentoring
relationship was the lack of willingness to commit to the mentoring relationship and the process of being mentored. This includes the time and investment, including the effort to meet with a mentor regularly and being consistent in doing the work it takes to transform spiritually. This isn’t something that happens overnight. It requires to be discipled and transformed through a mentoring relationship.

The researcher assumed there would be a lack of commitment due to time constraints, but only one individual expressed this as the reason for the lack of commitment. The other respondents indicated they just were not ready to be mentored and were, therefore, not willing to enter into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes. This was an unexpected barrier for the researcher, as well, because the researcher had not considered the possibility that a disciple of Christ who needs to grow spiritually might not want to grow spiritually. Women have to want to grow and must be ready to submit to the discipleship process, or the mentoring relationship will not be effective or transformative.

There could be various reasons as to why these respondents were not ready to be mentored for discipleship purposes, but it would take further study and exploration to determine these reasons. It could be that some respondents were not ready to change old habits or were not ready to be held accountable in regard to how they live out their Christian faith. It could be that these respondents believe they are already growing in their relationship with Christ and do not want to invite someone else into that process at such an intimate level. These reasons are important to identify because no matter how many mentors are available to disciple potential mentees, if the mentees are not ready to be discipled through mentoring, then discipleship simply will not happen. Identifying the reasons these respondents were not ready could help the researcher identify ways to help potential mentees ready themselves to be mentored for discipleship purposes.
Equipping Women to Mentor

Several women indicated the reason they said no to the question of whether they would be willing to mentor someone else in the church is because they did not feel equipped or qualified. In order to address why these women, feel unequipped and unqualified, further research would have to be done. There can be several reasons these women feel like this. Some women mentioned they feel that they do not know the Scriptures as well as they should, while others did not specify. It is possible these women may feel like they do not have the proper training on how to be a mentor. Some women may think they are not mature enough spiritually to mentor someone else. Other women may think they are too old, and some women may think they are too young and do not have enough life experience to mentor someone else. Another reason could be that some women may feel like they do not understand theology and/or church doctrine well enough to mentor someone else.

The reason(s) women feel unequipped or unqualified would determine how to equip them and/or help them to understand the qualifications needed to be a mentor, based on biblical principles and not based on unrealistic expectations they may put on themselves. As discussed in the literature review, many women believe they must “have it all together,” have large portions of Scripture memorized, and be perfect Christians to mentor someone else. This is simply not true. Although some women really may not be at a place in their faith walk to mentor someone else, often it can be unrealistic expectations and self-doubt that can prevent a woman from feeling equipped or qualified to mentor someone else.

Comparison of Research Findings

After analyzing and coding the data to provide meaningful results, the researcher observed some similarities compared to information the researcher gleaned from her review of the literature
for this project. The results from this researcher’s findings indicated that the women surveyed viewed mentoring as something needed in the local church for women to grow spiritually. Several women in the survey stated mentoring for discipleship purposes is needed and critical for women in the church. The women in this study viewed mentoring as a positive and stated it helped them be more genuine and authentic to who they are and who they are in Christ. Previous research findings indicated that women need to be mentored in the local church in order to develop healthy identity and grow spiritually.96

Previously published literature also supports that a benefit of mentoring relationships is that it can put theory and practice together.97 Having a mentor allows for a mentee to be taught and also to observe what is being taught in action through role-modeling.98 Role-modeling was a common reason the women in the researcher’s study indicated they were able to grow spiritually and be discipled. Several women expressed that their mentors were role-models for them and provided examples of how to live for Christ and apply the principles and truths they were learning within their mentoring relationship to their lives.

Research findings from the researcher’s study also indicated that women believe having a mentor for discipleship purposes helped them to deal with challenges they faced in their faith walk. They were able to work through challenges more easily because they had someone listening to them, praying with and for them, supporting them, and guiding them. This is similar to previous


97 David A. Stoddard and Robert Tamasy, The Heart of Mentoring: Ten Proven Principles for Developing People to Their Fullest Potential, (Quezon City: Navigators Ministries Philippines), 2006, 22-23

literature that reported women mentoring one another can help them identify challenges and
struggles and work through them better.99

There were several barriers to entering a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes
that surfaced in the researcher’s survey results. Previous literature suggested that feelings of
inadequacy or low self-esteem, work-home life balance, lack of cross-gender mentoring,
generational differences, and lack of leadership development can lead to women not entering into
mentoring relationships. The results from this research project also indicated that some women feel
unequipped or inadequate to mentor other women for discipleship purposes. Some of these women
indicated they did not feel well-versed enough in Scripture to mentor someone else. Sophie Hudson
pointed this out as a barrier many women face to becoming mentors to other women, because they
think they have to know the Bible “backwards and forwards” in order to mentor someone else.100 If
they think they do not know the Scriptures to this extent, they opt not to become mentors. There
was only one individual who indicated time as a reason she could not commit to being in a
mentoring relationship, so work-home life balance was not a common reason for women entering
into mentoring for discipleship purposes within this group of women as research suggested it might
be.

Generational differences were also not an issue presented by survey respondents as a barrier
to entering into mentoring relationships. The survey results indicated that most respondents were
being mentored by women in leadership positions within the church; however, there were no
women mentors in senior leadership positions like that of a pastor. Research findings suggest there

99 Deseree Newkirk and Bruce S. Cooper, "Preparing Women for Baptist Church Leadership: Mentoring
Impact on Beliefs and Practices of Female Ministers." Journal of Research on Christian Education 22, no. 3

100 Sophie Hudson, Giddy up, Eunice: (Because Women Need Each Other). (Nashville, TN: B&H
is a lack of leadership development amongst women for senior leadership positions in the church, and this may be the reason there were no women pastors mentoring participants in the researcher’s study.

Cross-gender mentoring occurred with few participants, but the women were open to having either a female or male mentor, and several respondents had no preference for whether they would mentor a female or male mentee. It was interesting to note that while the literature review suggests that women prefer same-gender mentoring, many women in this study stated that they did not have a gender preference for who mentored them and that they would mentor male or female mentees. There was a low number of women who had been mentored by a male, and this is consistent with literature reporting that cross-gender mentoring is not common in the church.

**Applicability to Other Settings**

The findings from the researcher’s survey results may apply in other settings amongst Christian women between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five. There was a 100 percent positive outlook on mentoring for discipleship purposes in the church amongst women and overall women wanted a mentor to guide and walk alongside them through their spiritual journey. The implications of this is that mentoring may be a great way for churches to do mentoring amongst the women in their churches, because the women in their congregations may be open to it or desire it like the women in this study.

The research in this study also suggested that there are both internal and external barriers to women entering a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes. The barriers of lack of trust,

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fear of intimacy and vulnerability, committing to mentoring, feeling unequipped, and a lack of available mentors that were highlighted in this study could be barriers that are preventing women in local congregations from entering into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes. The survey utilized in this project can be utilized with other women in order to know how they view mentoring for discipleship purposes and to determine the unique barriers they may have to entering such a relationship.

The results may vary, but the research from this survey suggests that there are barriers that exist to entering into this type of mentoring relationship and this study can be reproduced in other settings like a church, Christian women’s organization, or Christian school to see if women desire this type of mentoring for discipleship and if they have any barriers to doing this. The participants came from various church denominations and education levels, so the findings are not for just one church background. The survey is easily reproduced and can be offered online to any woman. The survey can also be distributed physically if online access is an issue, but collecting the surveys once completed may be more challenging and costly, it will be necessary to create another way to keep the surveys anonymous. If surveys are not kept anonymous, how participants respond may be impacted.

Mentors and church leaders may utilize the information presented in this research to substantiate that mentoring for discipleship purposes worked for women in this research study and may be of benefit to the women in their networks or churches. Women experience deeper levels of spiritual growth by entering into a mentoring relationship within the church for discipleship purposes. Doing this also led many of the women to then want to give to someone else what they had received by becoming a mentor themselves. This is an example of disciples making disciples and honors the biblical model of 2 Timothy 2:2.
Summary

This research project has taught the researcher so much about women mentoring other women in the church for discipleship purposes. The researcher set out to understand the views and attitudes women have towards mentoring one another in the church for discipleship purposes, and this goal was accomplished. The researcher was able to see that women have positive views towards mentoring for discipleship purposes and that they believe that mentoring relationships are needed in the church for spiritual growth. The researcher observed that although almost 46 percent of the respondents in the researcher’s network and sphere of influence have not been mentored, just over 54 percent have, and that exceeded her expectations. This is good, and the researcher was pleasantly surprised by this, but there is still room for improvement in terms of the number of women being mentored in the church for discipleship purposes.

Something that impacted the researcher tremendously was to see that there were a lot of women who feared being vulnerable or intimate with a mentor. The researcher did not consider this would be a barrier to entering a mentoring relationship because the researcher has enjoyed many mentoring relationships that were enriched by being vulnerable with each mentor. Having someone to be accountable to and vulnerable with was one of the reasons the researcher was drawn to enter mentoring relationships for discipleship purposes. The researcher wanted spiritually mature, trustworthy, loving mentors that she could share personal matters with, be challenged by, and grow with. Something the researcher had to consider was that not everybody has had positive experiences opening up to others, whether with a mentor or someone else. Some people can be judgmental, and some people can break confidentiality even unintentionally. These could be reasons some of these respondents may have opted not to be mentored or even hesitated to be mentored at some point in
their lives before finally committing to a mentoring relationship in the church for discipleship purposes.

The researcher expected that the survey would uncover both internal and external barriers to entering mentoring relationships in the church for discipleship purposes. What she did not expect was the number of internal barriers that were indicated. Trust was a big concern for the respondents. This made the researcher question what may be going on in these respondents’ personal lives or even in the church to explain why trust is just not there. The church is supposed to be a sanctuary where people can be vulnerable and confide in one another, to provide help and strength for one another. The researcher was aware that church hurt exists and that people may break confidentiality by sharing something that was shared in private with others, but it was the fact that lack of trust was a common barrier to entering into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes that concerned the researcher. Perhaps the church body at large needs to do a better job of teaching people the importance of confidentiality and reminding people to treat others the way they would want to be treated.

Everyone has gone through something challenging in life; everyone makes mistakes. No one would like the intimate details of his life to be shared without permission, so there is no reason for anyone to do this. The researcher always stresses to those whom she mentors that anything discussed within the mentoring relationship will be kept confidential. The researcher does not just state that information will be kept confidential, she honors this. The researcher will be even more sensitive to the fact that some women fear intimacy, vulnerability, and trusting a mentor in the church regardless of whether they already know the mentor. The researcher will utilize what has been learned in this project to grow as a mentor and to assist others who are mentors or desire to become mentors by sharing the insights learned throughout this research project.


Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/research_ready/phenomenology/phen_overview (accessed October 13, 2008)


Goodwin, Lonnie Eloris. "Effective Discipling of Women." Order No. 10103301, Biola University, 2016. In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global,


CONSENT FORM

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF WOMEN’S ATTITUDES TOWARDS MENTORING OTHER WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Natasha Pettigrew
Liberty University
Doctor of Ministry

You are invited to be in a research study on the attitudes that women have towards mentoring other women in the church. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a Christian adult woman between the ages of 18 and 65. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Natasha Pettigrew, a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Ministry program at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to explore the views and attitudes that women have towards mentoring one another in the church for the purpose of discipleship.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following:

- Complete the survey that can be accessed after reading this consent form. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits:

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participants will complete the survey anonymously; therefore, responses cannot be traced back to participants.
• Data will be collected and stored online through Survey Monkey and can only be accessed by researcher with account password. Per federal regulations data will be retained for three years and then all electronic records of survey responses will be deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting this relationship.

How to Withdraw from the Study:

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Natasha Pettigrew. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at npettigrew@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty chair, Dr. Steve Vandegriff, at svandegriff@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study. Click next to acknowledge you consent and to begin the study. You do not have to sign or return the consent form since it is anonymous.
Mentoring Survey

1. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

2. What is your age?
   - 18-24
   - 25-34
   - 35-44
   - 45-54
   - 55-65

3. What is your marital status?
   - Single
   - Married
   - Widowed
   - Divorced
   - Separated

4. Daily Activity
   - Working full time (more than 30 hours a week)
   - Working part-time (8-30 hours a week)
   - Carer (of home, family, etc.) (full time)
   - Student (full-time)
   - Temporarily unemployed (but actively seeking work)
   - Retired
   - Other permanently unemployed (e.g. chronically sick, independent means)
5. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than high school degree
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor degree
- Graduate degree

6. What is your church denomination?

- Catholic
- Baptist
- Non-Denominational
- Methodist
- Wesleyan
- Lutheran
- Presbyterian
- Protestant
- Pentecostal
- Charismatic
- Episcopal
- Anglican
- Congregational
- Assemblies of God
- Evangelical
- Reformed
- Church of the Nazarene
- Apostolic
- Salvation Army
- Full Gospel
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify) [ ]

7. Have you ever entered into a mentoring relationship WITH a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes?

- Yes
- No

8. How did you find your mentor?

[ ]

9. Was your mentor male or female?

- Male
- Female
- Male and female
10. Did you have a preference of whether your mentor was male or female?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ No preference

(please specify preference if you answered yes)

11. Was your mentor in a leadership position within the church?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please specify position

12. In general, describe your attitudes and views on entering into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes.

13. Do you believe establishing a mentoring relationship:

☐ Improved your intimacy with Jesus
☐ Shed light on your life purpose

☐ Increased your practice of the spiritual disciplines? (e.g., Scripture reading, praying, mediation, fasting, journaling)
☐ None of these

☐ Influenced your leadership ability

14. Did your relationship with your mentor help you to deal with any challenges you may have faced as a disciple of Christ?

☐ Yes
☐ No

(please explain response)
15. Describe any barriers that you had to overcome in establishing a mentoring relationship.


16. Did you identify with your mentor because he or she individually influenced you by being a good role model?

☐ Yes
☐ No

17. Did your mentor inspire you spiritually to cultivate your relationship with Christ?

☐ A great deal ☐ A little
☐ A lot ☐ None at all
☐ A moderate amount

18. Did your mentor assist you in setting goals to aid in your spiritual growth process?

☐ A great deal ☐ A little
☐ A lot ☐ None at all
☐ A moderate amount

19. Did your mentor hold you accountable to reaching those goals?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not Applicable

20. Did your mentor provide you with any feedback or recognition upon accomplishing a goal?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not Applicable

21. How did your mentor stimulate you spiritually?


22. Did your mentor keep track of your spiritual growth progression?

☐ Yes
☐ No
23. Did you feel your mentor gave you individual consideration and personal attention by treating you in a way that showed he or she truly cared about you and your development?

☐ Yes
☐ No

24. How did being mentored for discipleship purposes impact your life overall as a disciple of Christ?


25. Have you ever entered into a mentoring relationship **AS a MENTOR** within the church for discipleship purposes?

☐ Yes
☐ No

26. Was the mentee male or female?

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Mentored both

27. Did you prefer to do same-gender mentoring?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ No preference

28. What influenced your decision to mentor someone for discipleship purposes?


29. How did you stimulate your mentee spiritually?


30. Did you strive to give your mentee individual consideration and personal attention by treating them in a way that shows you truly care about them and their development?

☐ Yes
☐ No
31. Would you recommend other women to enter into a mentoring relationship within the church for the purpose of discipleship based on your mentoring experience?

☐ Yes
☐ No

(please explain response)

32. Would you be willing to mentor a mentee within the church for the purpose of discipleship?

☐ Yes
☐ No

(please explain your response)

33. Would you be open to mentoring a male or female mentee?

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ No preference

34. In general, describe your attitudes and views on entering into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Never thought about it

35. Have you ever wanted to enter into a mentoring relationship WITH a Mentor within the church for discipleship purposes?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Never thought about it
36. Did anything prevent you from finding a mentor?

37. Would you have preferred a male or female mentor, or no preference?
   - Male
   - Female
   - No preference

38. If you would have had a mentor, do you believe he or she would have helped you to deal with any challenges you may have faced as disciple of Christ?
   - Yes
   - No
   (please explain response)

39. Were there any barriers that prevented you from entering into a mentoring relationship?

40. Do you think having a mentor would have made a difference in your spiritual development up to this point?
   - Yes
   - No
   (please explain response)
41. How do you think being mentored for discipleship purposes would have impacted your life overall as a disciple of Christ?

42. If you could turn back time in your discipleship process would you attempt to enter into a mentoring relationship for discipleship purposes?

☐ Yes
☐ No

(please explain response)

43. Have you ever entered into a mentoring relationship AS a MENTOR within the church for discipleship purposes?

☐ Yes
☐ No

44. Was the mentee male of female?

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Mentored both

45. Did you prefer to do same-gender mentoring?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ No preference
46. What influenced your decision to mentor someone for discipleship purposes?


47. How did you stimulate your mentee spiritually?


48. Did you strive to give your mentee individual consideration and personal attention by treating them in a way that showed you truly cared about them and their development?

☐ Yes
☐ No

49. Would you recommend other women within the church to establish a mentoring relationship within the church for the purpose of discipleship based on your mentoring experience?

☐ Yes
☐ No

(please explain response)

50. Would you be willing to mentor a mentee within the church for the purpose of discipleship?

☐ Yes
☐ No

(please explain response)

51. Would you be open to mentoring a male or female mentee?

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ No preference

(please explain response)
April 9, 2019

Natasha Pettigrew  
IRB Exemption 3745.040919: A Phenomenological Exploration of Women’s Attitudes Towards Women Mentoring Other Women in the Church

Dear Natasha Pettigrew,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP  
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research  
Research Ethics Office

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971