

Mentors Can Shape Your Prayer Life

Having a Life Coach is a popular phenomenon these days. Many people—especially leaders—have someone who can look critically at a person’s effectiveness in their life work, relationships, etc., and offer tips and suggestions on how to improve in their areas of weakness.

I don’t knock that practice, but I have never had such a person in my life. Maybe I would be a corporate CEO today if I had.

I have had mentors, though. People who I have learned from in specific areas of my life. Some were personal like Dr. Neil Foster (my first boss in publishing), Sandra Higley (my assistant at *Pray!* Magazine), Dr. Alvin VanderGriend (a prayer mentor), Lee Brase (prayer leader at The Navigators), and Dave Butts (great friend and former boss when I worked for Harvest Prayer Ministries). Others mentored me through the books they wrote.

One such author mentor was Dr. A. B. Simpson, a famous missionary statesman of the late 1800s and early 1900s, and founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. I started reading Simpson in earnest when I became his editor! My first publishing job was as Classics Editor at the C&MA’s publishing house. I worked to repackage many of Simpson’s 100 plus books to reissue them for modern readers.

Simpson wrote a lot on the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and prayer. He shaped my thinking about prayer as I read *The Life of Prayer* and the prayer sections in his Christ in the Bible commentary series.

“Prayer is the secret force of everything in the spiritual kingdom,” Simpson wrote in his commentary. “This great

ministry of prayer begins in the bosom of Jesus, but is by Him transferred through the Holy Spirit to the heart of His Church and carried on by us in the ministry of prayer on earth.”

Prayer became more important to me as I read, “Our work must be born in prayer, watered by prayer, guarded by and protected by prayer and the worker himself ever steeped in prayer, and hidden behind the supernatural working of an almighty hand.”

It was reading Simpson that got me, as a mid-30s believer starting to grow in my prayer life, to begin to realize that many believers and churches were not experiencing dynamic, transforming prayer in their lives or church. His works—and another C&MA mentor, A.W. Tozer and his book *The Pursuit of God*—were the start of my journey toward becoming the prayer leader I am today. They helped me become a voice for prayer in the local church.

Our spiritual growth will be more significant if we have mentors in our life. We all need the voices of others to remind us, push us, encourage us in our walks. Who are your prayer mentors?

Maybe you ARE a prayer mentor! If so, speak into others. Encourage them in prayer.

—Jonathan Graf is the publisher of *Prayer Connect* magazine and president of the Church Prayer Leaders Network.

Note: If you want to mentor others in prayer, a great resource to get is *Prayer That’s Caught and Taught: Mentoring the Next Generation* by *Prayer Connect* editor, Carol Madison, which offers 9 important principles on prayer and lessons on how to teach them to those you mentor.