

# **CityTeam Renew**

## **Spiritual Mentor Program**

CityTeam Renew is a residential Christian program for men and women overcoming homelessness and substance use disorder. These six-to-twelve-month programs provide holistic care and training intended to address the underlying issues that lead to homelessness and substance abuse.

As a Christian program, Christian teaching and practices are integrated into all aspects of the Renew daily program. These activities include:

- Daily large group, small group, and individual prayer practiced
- Daily Discovery Bible Studies both individually and in small groups
- Weekly Spiritual Formation classes covering general Bible knowledge and Christian practice
- Weekly classes on healthy boundaries and anger management that incorporate the Bible and Christian practice
- Weekly church attendance
- Weekly Christian based AA groups
- Weekly Case Management that integrates Christian teaching into helping residents move forward in their goals and life skills development
- All staff are Christians who actively speak to the residents about how to follow Jesus
- Access to professional counselors who may be Christians
- Church groups and Christians weekly volunteering and engaging with residents

Spiritual Mentors are added into this holistic mix to help each resident listen to and follow Jesus. Given the amount of teaching and activity listed above, Spiritual Mentors are not expected to be teachers, professional counselors, Spiritual Directors or to lead a prescribed spiritual formation/discipleship course. Instead, as a proven follower of Jesus, they are to listen to their mentee and invite the Holy Spirit to guide their relationship in its own unique formation.

More than anything else, our residents need healthy relationships that model a love for God and others in very practical ways. As someone once said, “More is caught than taught in human development.” This includes spiritual formation. Spiritual Mentors are most effective when they listen and observe, ask open-ended questions and more importantly, invite questions on any topic. Our residents are dealing with past trauma, major challenges and shifts in their thinking and behavior, experiencing feelings deeply, shame from their past, and uncertainty about their future. They need non-judgmental encouragers who meet them where they are mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Jesus gives few direct answers to questions in the recorded Gospels. He asks far more questions than he gives answers. Like Jesus, Spiritual Mentors are encouraged to ask open ended questions that help mentees question their own beliefs and behaviors. “What does God want me to know?” and “What does God want me to do?” are primary questions that help a mentee form their own practice of listening to and following Jesus in their daily lives.

A few questions that Jesus does directly answer are found in:

1. Mark 15:1-2 - Jesus, as king, vs Cesar, as king
2. Mark 12:28-31 - Jesus’ primary law in his kingdom
3. Luke 11:1-5 - Jesus’ guidance on how to engage with him and his kingdom.

Conversations around these types of questions and answers given by Jesus will generate many applications that both Spiritual Mentors and mentees can share together.

Spiritual Mentors come from all walks of life with various levels of education, life experiences, and personality styles. It is critical for Spiritual Mentors to just be themselves and humbly offer themselves to God in service and loving relationship to their mentees. A scripted program and methodology designed by others and parroted by Spiritual Mentors is not required. Like David declining King Saul's armor, Spiritual Mentor's must utilize their unique experiences and abilities with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to catalyze transformation in the lives of mentees.

With this in mind, the following simple program/job description is provided to guide Spiritual Mentors.

## **Spiritual Mentor Program**

**Purpose** - Model and assist CityTeam residents in listening to God and walking in the ways of Jesus.

**Desired Outcome** - Resident develops a trusted friendship with a more mature follower of Jesus and grows in their ability and experience in listening to God and living in the ways of Jesus.

**Method** – Spiritual mentor meets weekly for one hour with a resident for the duration of her/his program to provide a non-anxious presence that listens to what the resident is experiencing and questioning. The mentor uses his/her life experience, her/his experience with God, and depends on the Holy Spirit to form a trusting relationship with the resident. Through that trusting relationship, beliefs and behaviors can be invited to change. Colossians 4:6 “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

### **Qualifications**

- Enjoy listening to God and following in the ways of Jesus
- Active member of church/spiritual community with a recommendation from a leader in that community
- Desire to listen to and care for residents overcoming substance abuse
- Willing to commit one hour/week for up to nine months mentoring a resident

### **Actions**

- See “Method” above
- Practice the Jesus way of partnering - be “gentle and humble in heart.” Matt.11:29
- Only encourage actions that you are actively practicing

### **Boundaries**

- Do not give money or expensive gifts
- Do not invite a resident to your home or give your home address
- Discuss concerns or questions with the Program Director