

## New: Youth Pastors Connect for Online Mentoring Program

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Imagine that you have just been appointed as the new youth pastor of your church. There are 100 high school boys and girls in your community and you are now responsible for their spiritual growth and well-being. Because the previous youth pastor has moved away and is busy with work, your only toolkit is your memory of what youth ministry was like when you were a participant.

Sounds daunting, right?

The newly-launched Youth Pastors Mentoring Program is trying to change that. “New youth pastors often start from scratch and are only just building up a strong ministry by the time they are ready to step down,” says Kaeleigh Moffitt, the National Youth Ministry Coordinator. Kaeleigh hopes to solve this problem by pairing new youth pastors with retired ones who have the gifts of wisdom and experience to offer. For seven weeks, mentors and mentees meet to discuss everything from their spiritual life, to how to set goals and actualize them. This saves new youth pastors from “reinventing the wheel,” says Kaeleigh.

Both old and new youth pastors who participated in the pilot iteration of the mentoring program in September and October agreed that it was a huge success. “She was exactly what I needed,” one participant reflected about her mentor. “I learned so many little practical tips.” Others added that the emotional support was sometimes even more valuable than the concrete advice. “Having someone just listen to your issues is a big help. ...It’s comforting to know that you are not alone.” Retired youth pastors welcomed the opportunity to give back from afar. “It was nice to offer support and be rooting for someone from the sidelines,” they shared. Some even regret that it has taken this long to establish a partnership. “I wish I had a mentor when I was the youth pastor!” one retiree exclaimed.

Kaeleigh hopes to expand the program in future years. “I am really excited to have found a way to continue working with previous youth pastors,” she shared.