



## *Spiritual Mentors*

Research shows that if a person makes at least seven new and close friends within the first six months of joining a church, they have a greater rate of remaining faithfully involved in that church. Notice the words “close friends.” This means more than just giving a handshake on Sabbath and saying, “Happy Sabbath.” The level of friendship required must transcend the Sabbath hours. The Spiritual Mentors program provides practical ways of befriending new members and connecting them to the church family.

The Outreach Leadership Team is to select established church members who are willing to befriend these new members. These established members need to be mature Christians who are committed to Jesus and have a love for others. A leader for the Spiritual Mentors must also be selected by the Outreach Leadership Team. This leader’s responsibility is to ensure that each new member has a mentor.

### **Sample Activities for Spiritual Mentors**

- Make visits and/or phone calls.
- Invite new members home for Sabbath dinner once a month. Include other members who may have things in common with the new members. This will help the new member become acquainted with more people in the church.
- During the week, invite the new member to meet you for lunch at a local restaurant.
- Do social activities together. If you are planning a day of recreation, include your new member friends. Train yourself to think in terms of including new members in all of these activities.
- Sit with your new member friends in church, at fellowship meals, and at functions.

### **Be patient with new believers**

Being a mentor to new members involves some areas in which you will need to exercise patience:

- Be careful not to take new members too fast into areas of diet, reforms, etc. Ellen White cautioned that it is better to err on the side of the people and to be one step behind them than to be one step ahead of them.

- It is never appropriate to share with new members materials from groups that have an ax to grind. You may think it is grand material, but it will tend to destroy their confidence in the church and the message.
- There is a need to be patient with new members. Conviction regarding lifestyle issues often develops over time as the new member grows in knowledge and experience. During this time of growth, we need to be patient, loving, and kind.

**Be an Introducer**

A simple yet vital part of being a Spiritual Mentor is to introduce new members to other church members whom they have not already met. Simply say to the new member, "I want you to meet \_\_\_\_\_." Then go to the member and say, "John, have you met [the new member]?" Turning to the new member, say, "John runs a contracting company in town." At different times, it may be appropriate to suggest to a member to go over and visit with a new member or attendee. Take the initiative and make these things happen. This is your ministry.