

Ultimately, whichever pattern or context we use, the aim of mentoring is the same. To guide someone to respond to God by forming a personal rule of life. Using the CROWN framework, we believe that they not only have the joy of seeing Jesus at work day by day, but continue to do so as the rhythms they sustain become a natural part of who they are. Your Kingdom Come, Lord Jesus!

"We are convinced that a church filled with people who are living each of these rhythms sustainably day by day will become unstoppable."



The **CROWN** Rhythm



Mentor Guide



The **CROWN** Rhythm

CROWN MENTORING IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

In whatever setting mentoring takes place, it would be helpful if both the Mentor and mentee(s) have read the basic CROWN booklet before the first meeting and this itself could be a useful starting point for conversations. However, it may be useful to bear the following in mind for working in the following contexts:

MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

Within our Missional Communities, our aim is that everyone is being mentored to establish a CROWN rhythm. Experience suggests that one size is unlikely to fit all - and so a mixture of approaches will often be needed (see below.) The core team of the group share oversight to help each member engage with CROWN in the most helpful way for them. It is likely that an MC can incorporate some common CROWN rhythms within their own patterns, especially around Networks and Community. MCs can also bring some teaching input that is then later applied in the mentoring settings. Do share ideas with other MCs and see how they do it.

DISCIPLING GROUPS

Mentoring in smaller groups (usually sub-sets of an MC) provides a real energy and momentum to the process. A Small Group has the strength of being able to pray together, celebrate what God is doing and allow the energy of the group dynamic to urge one another on to develop effective rhythms. It also is a sustainable pattern with potential for multiplication as an MC grows. This is not classic Bible study, and might better be described as Bible living because of the intentional approach to helping applying the teaching. Time is taken to identify and overcome struggles and blockages members face, as well as connecting them with external support they might need. This depth means the groups can't become too large, as it is not realistic for effective formation conversations to take place when time is too limited for individuals to share and reflect.

A Mentor also has to judge the most appropriate starting place within the CROWN rhythm for the group as a whole. This may mean that when a member has a well established pattern already in this area, rather than leave them a frustrated passenger, this is a good opportunity to enable them to share their experience and any wisdom they might have with others.

THE MENTORING PROCESS

Good mentoring is at the heart the CROWN process. Fundamentally, a mentor is to help someone engage with what God is saying to them, and to respond to that by forming sustainable patterns and practices in which they experience the Holy Spirit at work in their lives. This will yield the fruit of seeing others grow and change, developing in their own callings.

Adele Ahlberg Calhoun in *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, (p141-143 are worth a read) notes, "In Christian theology the Holy Spirit is the mentoring nuclear reactor of transformation. And one of the tools in his hand is the body of Christ." Citing Barnabas, nicknamed, 'the son of encouragement' and his influence on Paul - who would then mentor Timothy and other examples, she highlights the centrality of this pattern in Christian growth.

Just as a mentor desires to encourage and accompany others to grow, a mentee must also make a commitment into the process. And any group they are part of. This expectation is to be clear from the beginning and should not be approached half-heartedly, though it is important to review every six months or so.

Mentoring isn't a functional process of filling in boxes, but a relational process with the opportunity to help each mentee draw closer to God and allow him to speak into their lives. Building effective God-led and God-centred patterns is all part of raising up a community of disciples strong in faith. As Daniel 11:32 puts it "...the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits."

Prayerful wisdom is needed to guide someone through shaping their own rule. It may affect the sequence with which we take someone through the CROWN framework.

It is important not tackle everything at once - it is both daunting and likely to be overwhelming. We recommend working on one aspect of the CROWN rhythm at a time until progress is established. It is usually helpful for people to focus on their least bright part of the crown as they maintaining their existing patterns in the other areas.

If we sense someone primarily needs to draw close to God, then it might be unwise to start them off in a demanding outreach commitment that should be an expression of the overflow of their love for Jesus.

Of course, if someone is just stale, then something of a networks focus might be exactly the challenge someone needs. It will bring them to a greater place of dependency upon Jesus - it is often outside our comfort zones that we really meet with God.

BASIC KINGDOM PRINCIPLES

In Mark 1:15, when Jesus announces the good news of the Kingdom of God he also gives instructions in how we access it. He calls us to "Repent and believe." These two instructions form the doorway to a kingdom lifestyle.

As we repent of ungodly thinking, actions and attitudes we make room for God to renew us and work in and through us. This is expressed by the image of baptism - where our old self dies, and as it does, a new life filled with resurrection power emerges.

In forming rhythms, rather than jumping to human problem-solving, we need to help those being mentored to identify where God is at work in their lives, and to take steps of faith in response.

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Hebrews 11:6.

A mentor, then, has a role to guide the shaping of a CROWN rhythm that helps each disciple grow in a heart to seek God and come to that place of reward - the ultimate reward of seeing God at work in their lives.

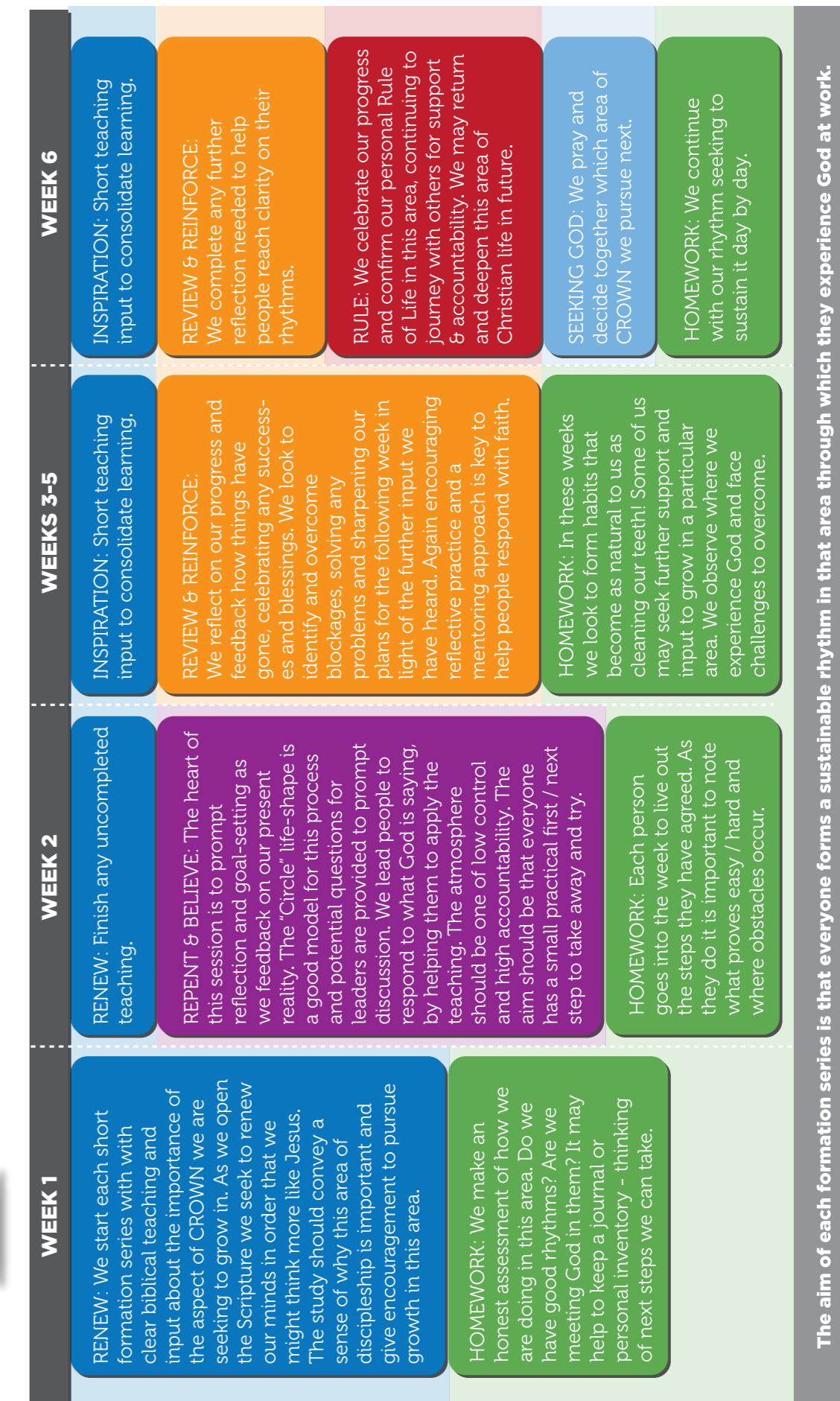
One of the most helpful resources to guide this kind of conversation is the Circle 'Lifeshape', a pattern found in Mike Breen's Building a Discipleship Culture (2011). The circle guides a process of reflection to enable the mentee to discern what God is saying to them, and how they will respond.

CROWN is not about striving or trying harder. In fact, sometimes people may need to stop something to make space for their new rhythm. Instead it is a constant encouragement to position ourselves to see more of God's work in our lives. Contrast the difference between rowing and sailing. Rowing is hard work, demanding strength and effort to progress, sailing is different, effort and skill is involved to position the boat but the real power comes from the sails catching the wind.

As someone forms a rhythm, a mentor may want to ask: "does this feel like rowing or sailing? Striving or faith?" The following steps will help to tease this out.

CROWN MODULES

FROM INFORMATION TO TRANSFORMATION THROUGH HOLY SPIRIT LED FORMATION.



The aim of each formation series is that everyone forms a sustainable rhythm in that area through which they experience God at work.

STEP 1: RENEWING MINDS: Teaching Input

In Romans 12:2, St Paul urges us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The first step is to engage with the question, What is God saying?

It is important, as we approach each aspect of the CROWN rhythm that our perspectives are rooted in truth, that we think about things biblically. This clarity will help ensure that the patterns we form are those in which we will experience God's goodness as we honour his principles and wisdom.

The CROWN teaching material provides a foundation from which we can do this. More often than not this won't be in isolation. Our engagement with the Scriptures more generally will bring application into each of these rhythms and it isn't unusual to discover God has been leading and challenging some to grow in specific areas already. Starting where God is already working is always a helpful place to begin!

The aim of this first step of the mentoring process is that each person has a clear sense of what the Bible teaches about Community, Re-Creation, Offering, Word and Networks and is beginning to work out what that might mean for them.

STEP 2: REPENT & BELIEVE: Personal Reflection and Application Responding to the Word

As we become clearer about what is true and life-giving it shines a light into our own lives. The next step of mentoring is to help people engage with the Word to them and apply it in their own lives. The following steps may be helpful:

Establishing a baseline:

A good starting point then is to get people to document all that they already do a particular (or each) element of CROWN, affirming and noting what is already good and fruitful. This personal inventory could be done as homework outside of a session.

Some may already know where God is calling them to prioritise growth, but a helpful exercise to gauge strengths and weaknesses is to get people to score out 10 how they think they are doing with each area. This exercise can also remind people of patterns that have lapsed but previously worked well; sometimes the CROWN framework can help people re-establish and then sustain what have been good historic practices.

Good questions are important at this stage to guide and encourage honest and realistic reflection, observing and understanding their present reality whilst helping the mentee to grow in hope and expectation for God's more for them.

STEP 4: RULE! Establishing Sustainable Patterns

Once the rubber hits the road, it is likely that people will encounter obstacles and blockages in establishing a rhythm. Some may be practical, a matter of changing daily routines to enable a routine to work - for me, my WORD rhythm was won by choosing to go to bed earlier.

Others may simply not know how to go about living out their faith in a particular area. It isn't the mentor's role to teach and guide in all areas of faith; instead various resources and support are available to help people grow in each aspect of the CROWN rhythm. The mentor's role is to help each person to identify and take up the available support that is most appropriate to their needs.

As someone makes progress with their rule, it is important to celebrate every success. Perspective helps with this. Suppose someone is seeking to read their Bible daily as part of their prayer routines but in practice they only seem to manage it every other day. They may feel like a failure, but, if they were hardly opening the Bible at all before, showing them their progress will help inspire them to keep going.

As people begin to consolidate growth and establish clear patterns get them to document this into what will become their rule going forwards. They can then sustain this area - and we can begin to repeat the process developing in the other aspects of the CROWN rhythm.

Once someone has set an aspect of their rule of life (and it is important they set it in response to how God is speaking to them) they give account to their mentor / triplet / group on their progress.

In this respect, the mentoring culture is one of low control and high accountability. We take seriously the commitments we make and urge on another on towards growth in Jesus Christ, celebrating one another's progress and victories and encouraging perseverance when things are less easy. We choose to give account of our rule to others for prayer and encouragement.

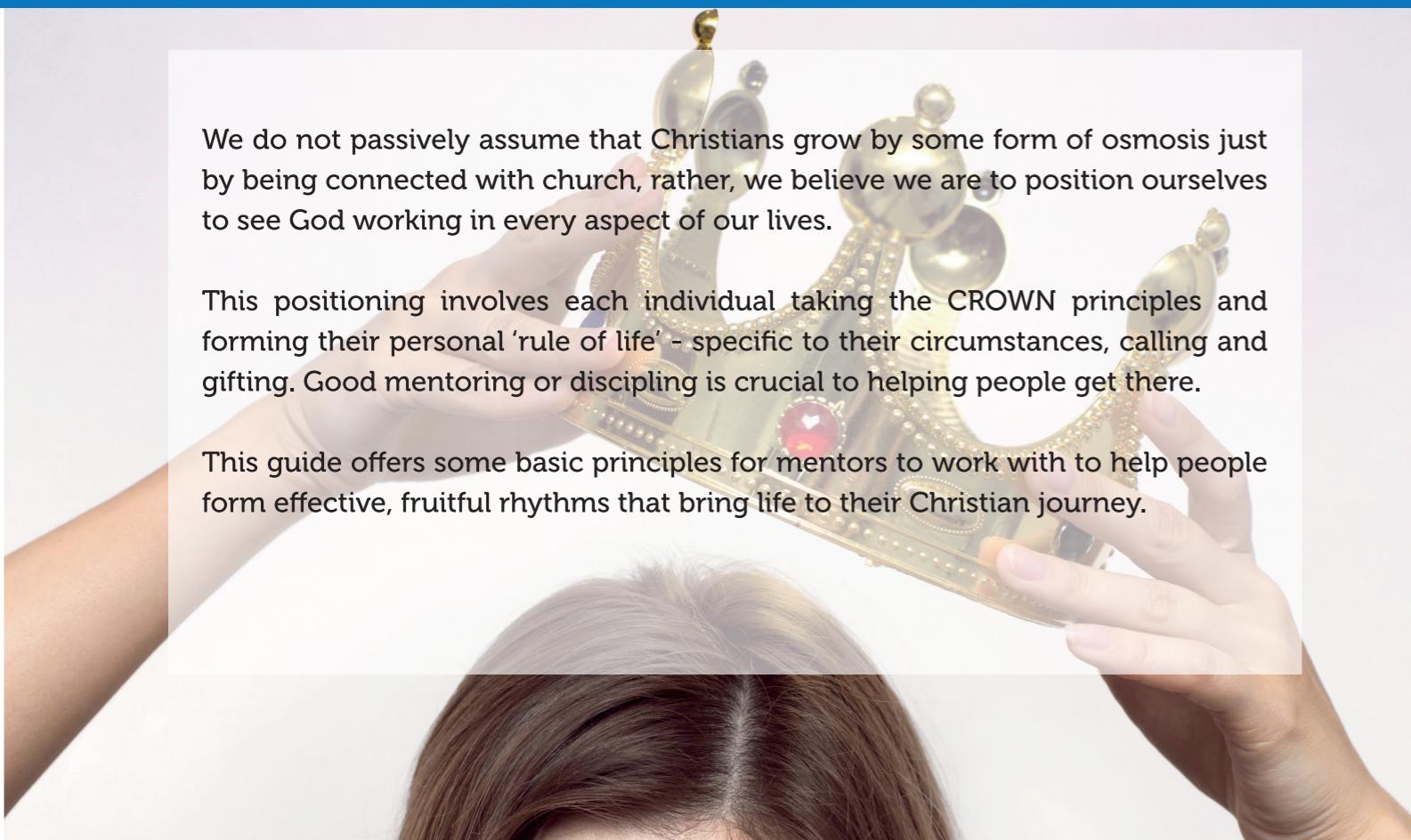
FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS?

As the church has sought to get to grips with what it means to witness to Jesus in an increasingly secular society, a consistent refrain across the traditions and denominations, a clear stirring of the Holy Spirit, has been to re-engage with the original call and commission of Jesus to make disciples.

Methods and patterns of ministry that maintained congregations for years no longer seem to be having the same impact. Rick Warren puts it like this, 'Churches are filled with people who have attended services for all of their lives but are still babies in the faith.' Mature discipleship is nothing to do with how old you are or how long you have sat in the pews or been involved in church activities. 'Millions of Christians have grown older without ever growing up.' (1995, p332)

The CROWN rhythm of life is a discipleship framework drawing on the wisdom and traditions of various missional and revival movements to make discipleship an intentional focus. It also draws together the threads of various resources we have developed at St Michael's (e.g. Spiritual MOTs) but placing them in a more consistent and effective framework.

Our goal is that everyone forms a sustainable, god-filled, life-giving personal rule in each area of the CROWN rhythm.



We do not passively assume that Christians grow by some form of osmosis just by being connected with church, rather, we believe we are to position ourselves to see God working in every aspect of our lives.

This positioning involves each individual taking the CROWN principles and forming their personal 'rule of life' - specific to their circumstances, calling and gifting. Good mentoring or discipling is crucial to helping people get there.

This guide offers some basic principles for mentors to work with to help people form effective, fruitful rhythms that bring life to their Christian journey.

CROWN MENTORING IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS (cont'd.)

TRIPLETS

CROWN triplets are lightweight and flexible - often being the best way to meet for those who have limited availability. It is ideal if triplets form under the umbrella of an existing ministry (e.g. a Missional Community) so that their connectedness with the wider ministry of the church is clear.

Triplets are more likely to be an 'equal structure' i.e. one of co-mentoring, without a clear leader as such, although where a group forms with new believers, a mature Christian will be needed to guide and lead.

Triplets can meet little and often, having the flexibility to adapt schedules to suit the group and can be places of real intimacy and depth, forging close friendships. It is important that such groups have a connection with the wider church to ensure they have the latest resources, materials and support.

1:1 MENTORING

The CROWN programme makes provision for mentoring on a 1:1 basis. There may be a variety of reasons why this is the best pattern for some people. Mentoring 1:1 should only take place with designated Mentors who have had appropriate training and are part of the mentoring team. Meeting 1:1 is hugely valuable, and can bring about accelerated progress in someone's life. For those with particular pastoral needs, CROWN may not be appropriate right away; they may need specific pastoral / prayer ministry support first. It is also an intensive pattern which is hard to multiply, and so, it should be seen as something that takes place for a season, before gradually encouraging people to transition into group contexts for their ongoing journey.

YOUTH

CROWN is for all ages, and one of the strengths of working with young people is that they can be helped to form patterns that might last them a lifetime. It is important to bear in mind the following:

- Young people are less likely to have existing patterns and are likely to need more support, example and help with modelling good rhythms.
- Young people respond well to groups, and it may help for them to share some rhythms with others, so they can compare experiences.
- Young people may find the challenges of adolescence a turbulent time, and mentoring will inevitably have a pastoral component.
- Mentors may need to adjust material to make it age appropriate. A big question is often Why does this matter? Show how Jesus modelled these things again and again highlighting the biblical foundations of CROWN.
- Young people are often willing to take risks, so don't be afraid to challenge.

THE MENTORING PROCESS (cont'd.)

Above all, the mentor can set the atmosphere of the journey. Alongside the basic expectation of confidentiality - the environment should be one of love, encouragement and fun, but with appropriate challenge, creating a real sense of adventure and taking great joy in celebrating the successes! With all this in mind, there are some clear principles and practices mentors can adopt to help people lead and disciple which the rest of this booklet begins to explore.

SUPPORT:

Finally, it is important for mentors to know they are not on their own. Support is available from the church leadership, and each Mentor should have a clear understanding of who they can turn to for advice and prayer, as well as the ministry area they will receive training from and be able to offer feedback through. This dialogue will help us further improve our resources and training as God continues to lead us forward.

WHAT & WHY CROWN IS IMPORTANT TO US

COMMUNITY:

We value belonging to and worshiping with the church family.

We aspire to grow in our relationships with each other meeting for conversation, coffee or food. As God sets the lonely in families, so we aim to get to know others in our fellowship beyond our existing circle of relationships. We acknowledge the significance of gathered worship, glorifying God together and building one another up.

A Community rhythm helps us grow and encourage each other as we encounter God together.

RE-CREATE:

We value regular life-giving rest.

We reject the incessant demands of modern life, and seek to model something better. We recognise the importance of having regular rest each week, to "re-create" by involving God in times when we cease "productive" work.

A Re-Create rhythm shows we won't let the world dictate our pace.

OFFERING:

We value using our gifts as we join God's plan to renew all creation, bringing glimpses of heaven to earth.

All of our life is worship, an offering back to God of ourselves. We seek to call the treasure out of one another, to discern and use our gifts, serving in and through church but also in the wider world. We acknowledge our work can play a part in the renewal of all things, as we live justly and glorify God in creativity and work for justice.

An Offering rhythm helps us give our all to heaven's work.

WORD:

We value pursuing a living relationship with Jesus and his word.

Jesus is the word made flesh. We long to sit at his feet in worship, hearing his word to us from the Bible. We seek to set time aside for worship, prayer and praise regularly, aiming to keep growing in this area of life. We consider this a priority, even when it is hard, the ancients called this an "oblation," a sacrifice of praise. We choose to live in the truth that our life flows from him.

A Word rhythm sits us at Jesus' feet in worship and lets God's word inspire us.

NETWORKS:

We value sharing life and faith with those outside the church.

Jesus sends each of us out to bear witness to him. In Luke 10, he gives us his strategy - to search for People of Peace. As we do this together, we value building relationship and regular connection with others in ways appropriate to our personalities / circumstances. Open to the Holy Spirit's leading, we seek to be good news, helping POPs take a 'next step' towards Jesus, be that through an act of kindness, hospitality, invitation, conversation etc.

A Networks rhythm helps us share life, love and faith with others.

Each CROWN module follows the same format and has been developed from all we have learnt from early groups. This simple overview is to help mentors understand and get to grips with the framework. The journey is intended to take us from biblical teaching to an established personal rule.

Week 1 - Renew Minds

- Bible study material which relates to one of the CROWN talks which are available in video or note form.
- Homework: Personal inventory sheet for mentees to complete.

Week 2 - Repent & Believe

- A series of prompts and questions to help with reflection and application of the teaching. (From clarifying what, teasing out how, illuminating motives, identifying blockages and keeping in step the Holy Spirit.)
- Examples of rules of life that others have adopted in this area based on experience and good practice.
- Resources to help people note and express their aspirations for growth.
- A framework for setting goals and making a start in putting things into practice, e.g. journaling experiences and progress.

Week 3-5 Review & Reinforce

- Short inspiration thought or study to set the scene for each week.
- Tips of how to celebrate good things and dig into difficulties to help people move forward.
- Follow-up questions to check in how it has gone for people. Where are they experiencing God? What are the difficulties?
- Notes of how to access others who might help someone grow in a particular rhythm with input outside the session.
- Ideas for next steps, to sharpen plans and developing practical learning.

Week 6 Rule! Establishing Ongoing Patterns

- Short inspiration thought or study to encourage perseverance.
- Checking in on any remaining issues.
- Celebrating progress, giving thanks for all God has done.
- Recording and confirming a personal rule.
- Advice and suggestions for ongoing patterns of accountability.

"Ask me not where I live and what I like to eat. Ask me what I am living for, and what I think is keeping me from living fully for that."

Thomas Merton

RAIDING THE TOOLBOX

RESOURCES:

There are a wide and growing set of resources available for mentors to access and use to meet the needs of a particular individual or group. These include video teaching and notes which are available on-line, Mentor "Quick Guides" with summary advice for each element of the CROWN rule, Discipling Discussion Questions to help mentoring conversations and Example Rules to help people think about how the CROWN principles can be applied. Useful books and other resources such as the previously mentioned Lifeshape material are also available for mentors to access.

Much of this can be downloaded from the church website, requested from the Church Office or borrowed from the Church Centre prayer room library.

Similarly, the clear biblical basis, simplicity and flexibility of CROWN means that resources or inspiration familiar to the Mentor can be applied to help people form their personal rule.

However, the principal resources are the specially designed modules, which build on biblical teaching in a way that mirrors the mentoring process.

These come in six week 'bursts', enough time needed to reflectively establish a new habit (research suggests 21 days), and dovetail with a 'half term' in the rhythms of the year. The modules build on the six foundational studies, and there are several for each element of the CROWN rhythm.

The forming of a full and effective CROWN rule then is a long term process, one that potentially might take a year or two to establish. We believe that slow is fast, and that the fruits and benefits are multiple - it is worth the investment.

PRAYER:

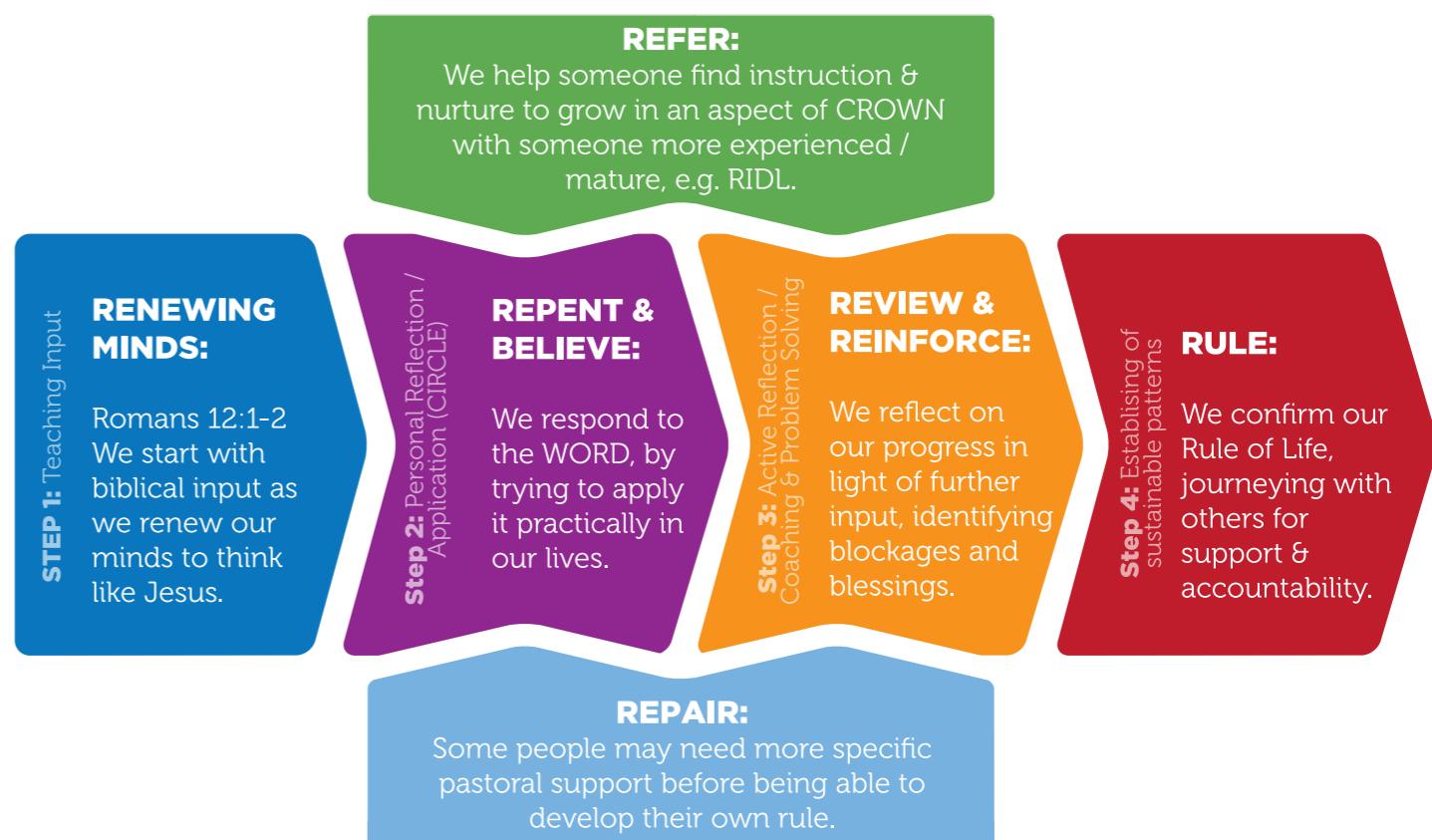
The first and most crucial resource of the Mentor is prayer. Prayer in preparation for and following any mentoring group / conversation is the key that will unlock real progress and growth. It might open the door to prophetic insight, or yield specific wisdom for the individual perhaps pointing to the resources that will best help them.

More than that, consistent and persistent prayer for other disciples can help them progress in their faith and maturity - and when this becomes a reciprocated and dynamic pattern, across a church, it brings about rhythms that see real kingdom impact.

FORMING A CROWN RHYTHM

CROWN is not intended to create more things for already busy Christians to do. Instead, we believe that by doing things in consistent and sustainable rhythms we can become more and more the people God wants us to be. Mentoring is a step by step process with that clear goal in mind.

These steps can be repeated over and over as people develop their rule in each aspect of CROWN, and then take their walk in each area deeper. The various CROWN modules are written with this process in mind.



STEP 2 (cont'd.)

Setting Vision:

This step is a chance to dream and build on where someone feels God is challenging them. Who do I want to be? Who does God want me to be in this area? Focusing on one area of CROWN at a time, what would an ideal 'rule' look like for someone?

Whether from a developing sense of conviction through God's prompting, St Paul writes in Philippians 2:13, For it is God who works in you to will and act according to his good purpose, or inspiration from teaching and the truth found in Scripture - it is good to get people to express their aspirations. Clear vision gives something to move towards, but we have to move from theory into practice. As a mentor we can help people for simple first steps to engage with living the principles out.

Having a Go

The ultimate aim of CROWN is to bring about transformation as we grow as disciples. It is important, therefore, to make a start early on in getting practical. After the first conversations about applying the teaching - encourage the mentee to take a simple first step. This will provide useful material for further reflection and formation. Make sure it is simple and not going to over-stretch someone.

REFER:

Sometimes it becomes clear that someone needs a little more specific help and expertise in an area. Mentors can refer someone to a member of the team who can give specific input for a short time on an aspect of CROWN, e.g. with a Retreat in Daily Life guide to develop a WORD rule. Jesus' pattern of teaching and discipling is often described as one of imitation not information. We see him modelling, working with and then releasing his followers into different aspects to ministry. We often have to see something in action to fully grasp what it is. We can be helped by those who are effective in this aspect of the Christian life.

Central to CROWN as a discipleship strategy is the provision of appropriate support, equipping and training. The role of the Mentor isn't to be an expert on everything but to sign-post people to the most appropriate source of support. For example, someone who wishes to grow in their prayer life can be pointed to a member of the church who is available to coach / guide them in effective patterns. Someone who wishes to grow in their experience of Community might be connected to others who express that at a time / in a pattern that would suit the individual. Mentors can check in with the church leaders about the current availability of support / coaching in each aspect of CROWN.

REPAIR:

It can also become clear that for some people, they are unlikely to make progress with CROWN until more specific pastoral support is given. In this case a mentor may connect someone with the pastoral care / prayer team.

STEP 3: REVIEW & REINFORCE

This step is likely to take a more extended period of time, and the role of the mentor is to encourage and guide the mentee(s) to continue develop their rhythm, reflecting on their experiences and how God they are experiencing God at work through it.

REINFORCE:

It may be useful to continue to continue to get the mentees to engage with biblical teaching. The CROWN module include shorter inspirational thoughts and insights to spark further thought and reflection.

Active Reflection / Coaching & Problem Solving

How did it go? How did you experience God through this? What was difficult? Good questions can help someone engage with the work of the Holy Spirit and develop their first steps into a rule. Their ideal might be something they grow towards their ideal goal –realistic goals make sense, faith is a muscle that grows through exercise, and our personal 'rules' should reflect that. A Mentor needs to help the disciple get the right balance between being stretched without being over-stretched - and not stagnating when we should be seeking to progress.

Formation, Identifying blockages

The first mentoring group I led included mostly 'mature' Christians and we started with the WORD rhythm. The reality was that we knew what we should be doing, but somehow most of us were struggling to consistently open the Bible and pray in the way we felt we wanted. This group needed little instruction in 'how to pray', instead a greater exploration of why we weren't was the focus. This was a revealing time, and often the step needed was simple, the unpicking of bad habits. For many it involved a cut off time, when we might go to bed, or stop work, so that we had the energy needed to come and pray. Though they prayed in the morning, one person's rule began, I go to bed by 10.30pm.

Together, then, we can help identify and overcome blockages. Sometime this may mean getting behind the issue to the underlying reasons / attitudes and challenging values that get in the way of progress - so God can set us free. This may expose strongholds and idols, for example, is someone really 'too busy' or is their career what comes first?

These matters of character formation can be hard - but the fruit is long lasting. Ultimately, we are to help one another catch the wind of the Spirit, so we take as much joy at his work in others' lives as in our own.

REFER & REPAIR:

As you begin to go deeper, like above, it may become apparent that someone needs further input if they are to grow and successfully establish their personal rule of life.