

Walking This Journey Together: Recovery Partners

So everywhere we go, we tell everyone about Christ. We warn them and teach them with all the wisdom God has given us, for we want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. I work very hard at this, as I depend on Christ's mighty power that works within me. (Colossians 1)

A recovery partner is someone who can be a loving witness to our new life and who can also provide perspective on our spiritual journey. He or she is someone who can appreciate what we are doing and how we are growing. We look for a partner/mentor/sponsor who can keep a confidence and listen with empathy. We seek someone who will not criticize us, but who will be able to suggest to us any obvious omissions or to give us insight into how the nature of our wrongs has affected us.

It is a true saying that if someone wants to be a guide/mentor, they desire an honorable responsibility. For a guide must be a person whose life cannot be spoken against. He/she must demonstrate faithfulness, exhibit self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. The mentor must enjoy being hospitable and must be able to teach. They must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He/she must be gentle, peace loving, and not one who loves money. A spiritual guide must be someone who demonstrates an ability to draw out respect and love from others and one who has integrity. They must be committed to the revealed truths of the Christian faith and must live with a clear conscience. Before they are appointed as leaders and models, they should be given other responsibilities as a test of their character and ability. If they do well, then they may serve as models or guides. (adapted from 1 Timothy 3)

While we look for a recovery partner we can respect, that person does not belong on a pedestal. He or she is not someone with all the answers all of the time. They make mistakes. They are human. Sometimes they will display imperfections. Recovery partners share their experience, strength, and hope, along with their understanding of the Twelve Steps of recovery. They offer support, suggestions, and caring, and over time we develop a basis for trust as we share our lives back and forth. A recovery partnership is a friendship made up of two individuals listening to God and learning from one another -- two people learning a new way to live, one day at a time.

Follow God's example in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love for others, following the example of Christ, who loved you and gave himself as a sacrifice to take away your sins. Dear brothers and sisters, if another Christian is overcome by

some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone in need, you are only fooling yourself. Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone, especially to our Christian brothers and sisters. (Galatians 6)

A recovery partner helps us learn to receive love, and how to pass it on. We can best put what we have learned into practice by passing it on. What do we have to give? How can we be there for someone else without losing our own sense of person? We don't have to be a Saviour, only a helper, whose example and experience might lead the other person forward in his or her own recovery. Being someone's partner provides us with a chance to share intimately, to care, to practice detaching with love, and to apply spiritual principles more consciously than ever.

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing. (Philippians 2)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Why is it important for us to support one another?
2. Why do we need an outside look at our thoughts and circumstances?
3. What benefits do we both receive from a recovery partnership?
4. What does God promise us if we pray for one another and encourage each other?
5. What makes it difficult to trust another person with our story and our ongoing situation/
6. Why do we sometimes push away good advice from a trusted Christian guide?
7. What makes it easier/harder to hear advice or suggestions from another Christian?
8. What are we currently doing to make space for and welcome input and suggestions from other Christians as we walk this spiritual journey?
9. Who might I invite to share more of my life with and seek advice and guidance from?
10. How am I making myself to others to pray for them and offer a listening ear to their journey and their needs?