Society of Mentors Meeting

February 1, 2022

Theme:

This call centered on furlough. The main speaker was Austin Gardner.

Introduction to Society of Mentors Program/Website {1:15}

We are constantly adding new material to the program.

Below the Core Training section, you will find the main set of materials such as this video.

Then, different resources have been translated into different languages for your use.

Moreover, the video notes are available below each video under ‘Resource Guide.’

We are almost finished setting up our book reading list. We will read books together and discuss them as part of our mentor program.

Furlough is a Biblical idea: {5:30}

In Acts 14:26-27, the Bible says that Paul and Barnabas returned to the church at Antioch. The Bible says that they went back from where they had been recommended and told them about the work that they had fulfilled. They rehearsed all that God had done with them and talked about how God had opened the door of faith among the Gentiles. So furlough is a Biblical idea.

Take care of your family: {7:25}

The number one challenge to do on furlough is to take care of your family. Block out time on your calendar for vacations and family time. To make it a priority, you need to plan out the year for your furlough, and within that year, you need to schedule family time/vacations. Approximately 2-4 weeks for family time because you need to reconnect with your family. Make your family a priority.

Reconnect your children with their grandparents. Your children need their grandparents, and your parents want to know your children. So you want your family close. Sometimes, it is a nuisance for men, but that is never the way to view it. In times of crisis, one of the greatest things you can have is your family. So I challenge you to take time to be with your family.

Help your children to learn to live in both cultures. They will be bi-cultural. They will have the national identity where you live, and then the American identity. You want them to appreciate America. You should not be making a decision about your children's future; they should have the choice to one day live in America. So they need to understand what it is to live there.

Many think that furlough hurts your church/ministry, and it can. But it depends on what type of ministry you have chosen to have. If you have chosen to be the Pastor, you can not be gone for a year. However, if you have chosen to be a missionary, you can transfer the responsibilities to the nationals. The nationals will take over the church, and you are going to do other things. If you are there as a multiple church planter, multiple leader trainer, then furlough is a good thing. It puts them to the test to see if they can make it, to see are they ready. Either they will see their weaknesses and will listen better when you return. Or they will be strong and not need you. Either way, furlough is a good way to test them. I believe that furlough helps your ministry because our ministry is to turn the work over to a national.

Absolutely nothing is more important than your family. I suggest that you take your wife out, attend a marriage retreat, and keep building your marriage.

Reconnect with your home church: {13:06}

The separation between you and your church is greater than you would have ever imagined. Within the four years you have been on the field, people have left the church, and new people have come to the church. You no longer know your church, and the church doesn’t know you.   
  
They need you, and you need them. They need you because you stir up the cause of missions and the passion of serving Jesus and doing more for Jesus than they have ever done before. You make a massive difference in that church, and it is wonderful what you are able to accomplish.

You need the church. The soul needs connections, and you need connections back in America. You need fellowship and camaraderie, which is what the Church should be.

Thank them. Encourage them. Be a blessing and an encouragement to your church and your Pastor.

Do a debrief of yourself: {16:02}

Do a debrief of yourself: do an intensive study of the past so you can prepare for the future. Study what you did/what you accomplished. Get refocused on your calling. Did I do what I felt like God wanted me to? Did I forget my priorities? Be honest. We can all do/be better. Evaluate what you have done and see what needs to be changed.

Pause and Think: {21:38}

What lessons have I learned over the past term?

Learn to read people

Be extremely open

Be super careful to listen

Figure out what worked; figure out what did not work

Think about and be grateful for all that God did and how He did it; i.e., how many people did you see saved?

Do a photo review using photos in your phone to review the last year  
Review your calendar

Create a list of columns labeled Red: Negative, Yellow: Caution, Green: Positive.   
Then, evaluate the following:

People

Places/Environments

Events

Then, put these different areas in one of each of the colored categories. Then, cut out the red. Yellow is neither pursued nor avoided. Green is positive; it encourages and invigorates you.

95% of your success or failure is based on who you surround yourself with, where you go, and what you do.

Remember: Life and ministry are about relationships.

What do you want to achieve next term? {37:22}

Start a Bible college

Train more men

Start more churches

Life has a way of sneaking up on you. In one term, you have 208 weeks. So use your time wisely and think through what you are doing.

What do you need to do to make it happen? {40:10}

Dream. Then figure out what you have to do to make it happen.

Get with someone to share your debrief with them to help you get aligned with what you want, what you are planning, what you have done, and what you are going to do.

Be a self-starter and a self-motivator.

Work on your personal growth: {43:12}

Evaluate yourself and figure out in what areas you need to grow. Grow in your bible knowledge and your walk with the Lord. Do not get too busy that you don’t spend time with the Lord or in the Word of God.

Grow culturally. You will win people by loving them. Learn to do things their way. Leave America at home. Watch their news programs. Read their blogs/podcasts. Watch their TV shows. Ask people to help show you what you are doing wrong.

Grow in church planting. On the society page, you can find church planting material. Seek out meetings where you can be encouraged and trained, and help you to be ready to do more when you return to the field. Find those places where you can be helped: i.e., camp meetings, retreats, Pastor’s meetings, etc.

Rest and Recuperate: {47:06}

You need to rest and recuperate. Encourage yourself, your family, your Pastor, and your church. If you have been working hard while on the field, you are going to need a break. Don’t run yourself ragged on furlough. Enjoy your time. Be grateful. ‘Don’t bank until you thank.’ Be sure to be thankful and to give thanks.

Don’t forget the work you left: {48:15}

What can you do to help them? First, spend as much time as you can with your people. Use the technology we have today to stay in touch with them. Your job is to make them a success. Think about them: what tools do they need? Books, computers, etc. See what you can do to help them if you can financially afford it.

They need to grow and learn. So let’s help them grow as well. Help them succeed. Help them invest in their family.

Raise new support both financially and prayer support: {49:50}

Block out time for rest, recuperation, and family time, and then try to book new meetings 1- 3 months before you go on furlough.   
  
The money you raise is not for you. Set a budget. Live right, not tight. Help nationals. Start churches. You need financial support, and you need prayer support.

Recruit new workers: {52:28}  
  
How are we going to get the world evangelized or reached with the Gospel if we don’t recruit new workers? Pray for God to give you young new missionaries. Mentor the younger missionaries. Give time to the students. Share whatever you can if they are willing to learn and listen.

Prepare new materials for your work: {53:48}

Prepare new messages, Bible college material, Sunday school materials. You don’t have to prepare it all, but find it and get it all together.

Cautions: {54:43}

* People know what you say and write in your ministry, so be careful.
* You can never say negative things about the place, the people, or the culture.
* You are going to face reverse culture shock.
* You need to work on growing spiritually and not getting cold.
* Furlough ought not to be a vacation. Don’t be lazy.
* Be careful to know that Satan will do all that he can to get you to quit.
* Don’t let bitterness creep in.
* Don’t abuse your furlough, nor the Pastors, nor the churches.
* Don’t come home and not go to church.
* If you are going to resign, don’t cause the church or the mission to feel like you have abused the money.

How did you utilize your furlough to recruit? {59:44}  
  
Take books to give away to help encourage people

Take time to go to youth events to preach   
Always mention that God might be calling you

Send them emails, keep in touch with them

How can we use modern technology to keep in touch with them? {1:00:45}

Set up a channel with young people and their parents, like Instagram or Facebook, or send a monthly letter to keep in touch with them and challenge them to serve the Lord.

How is furlough different than deputation when it comes to booking meetings? {1:01:48}

If you have all the support you need, don’t get more. Don’t be greedy. Evaluate your budget. Are you using the money in a way that is Christ-honoring? However, if you need more funds, then book meetings, but block off your family time and don’t accept a meeting at that time.  
  
How many meetings per month during furlough? {1:02:55}

If you don’t need more support, go to your home church. Visit other churches. Get in a more relaxed environment unless you need more support.

What should a monthly schedule look like on furlough? {1:03:18}

During furlough, 4-6 weeks of vacation within that year is not uncalled for. However, you ought to work 50-60 hours a week outside of those vacations. Moreover, you need an hour a day to grow, so include that on your schedule.

How to raise support for buildings and projects? {1:04:29}

I want to help you with buildings and projects. Helping with those projects is part of the society in order to work specifically with you to help raise funds. Prepare a video, information, brochure, etc., and you will be able to accomplish it.

What responsibilities do you have to report to supporting churches? {1:05:10}  
  
None. However, six months out, book your furlough with new meetings to raise more support. To raise $1,000, you will need ten churches at $100/month, so you will need to visit at least 30 churches.

Then, put out in your prayer letter that you would be glad to visit to report to your supporting churches and thank them for their support. You could also send everyone a letter, and give them a choice.

A lot of people don’t necessarily want you to come to visit. Others want you to come. If they contact you, definitely go visit them. Contact them, and put the ball in their court.

You have to be careful to book your vacation time, family time, and new meetings first.

How many would you attempt to visit, and how do you choose which ones to visit? {1:07:38}

Choose by letting them choose. Go to all that ask you to come to visit, if you can. Let them reach out to you.

How long should your furlough be? {1:08:26}

One year is a good amount of time.

What else can you do to grow during furlough? {1:08:46}

Read books

Listen to podcasts

Go to other groups/meetings to learn more  
  
Can I tell Pastors that I am raising funds for building projects? {1:09:15}

Yes, you can. Let them know what you are trying to accomplish, and ask if they would be willing to help you.

Closing Remarks: {1:10:15}

Before the meeting that we will have with David Gardner about language, and if you are training somebody in the language, you need to call him. He knows how to explain the culture and how to teach the language. Have 10-15 questions prepared to ask him. Ask him, “Am I handling this right?” Let him help you learn about language school.

Austin Till learned Chinese without a formal language school. So you need to ask him questions and let him help you.

Culture: People don’t understand their culture the way an outsider can because, for them, it’s not ‘culture,’ it’s just the way things are for them.