

Tips for Accountability Partners

As iron sharpens iron, so one believer sharpens another. Proverbs 22:17

Believers can help each other grow spiritually with positive confrontation and encouragement. The Word challenges us : “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10.24). Necessary ingredients for such an “encounter” include: Christian love, honest sharing, protection of one’s trust, prayer and accountability.

It is recommended that the “sharpening” encounter be experienced by prayer partners of the same sex. The pair should meet weekly allowing for a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 60 minutes. The time should include:

- 1) Sharing and praying about one another’s concerns.
- 2) Sharing insights gained from the Word in individual daily quiet times.
- 3) Accountability utilizing the “iron sharpening” questions listed below. The questions can be modified if there are other specific issues either participant would want to address and for which he/she would want to be held accountable.

Whatever form the questions take, accountability is the key.

1. How many days this week did you have your daily quiet time? What is God showing you through His Word?

If married...

2. Have you encouraged your spouse and specifically sought to meet his/her needs? Have you had a date lately, just the two of you? Are you spending adequate time with your children? When did you last have a special one-on-one time with them?

If single...

What are you doing to foster meaningful relationships with members of both sexes?
What attempts have you made to invest in the life of another this past week?

3. How is your thought life? Are you practicing Phil. 4.8, thinking on that which is true, honest, pure, etc.? Have all of your thoughts about and interactions with others been pure and honoring to the Lord?
4. Are you being a good steward of your time and money? Have you abused the use of credit in any way? What amount of time are you investing weekly in ministry? How is your witness in the neighborhood and workplace?
5. Every believer has a spiritual “Achilles Heel,” an area of life in which he/she is most vulnerable to the enemy. Identify your “spiritual heel”. How are you doing in that area of spiritual weakness? What are you doing to make it an area of spiritual strength?
6. Have you been totally honest with me in answering my questions?

What if you get a less than satisfactory answer?

- Set short term goals to be evaluated the following week.
- Seek scripture references that apply to the problem and/or solution.
- Pray together for God’s help in correcting problems/deficiencies.

What if someone shares with you a behavior that qualifies for church discipline (divisiveness, false doctrine, immorality)?

- Offer to go with your partner to a pastor or elder of his/her choice and share the matter in confidence. Good church discipline can almost always be carried out in a confidential manner with only the pastor and/or Elders knowing about it. Communicate church discipline as a corrective measure, not punitive in nature.

A perpetual unwillingness to co-operate in open, honest communication and to find constructive biblical solutions places the relationship in jeopardy and generally cannot be continued.

An Iron Sharpener's Contract

I, _____ commit to you _____
to be involved in an accountability relationship on a weekly basis. I promise to be open and honest with you in regard to every matter discussed. If a time arises when I feel I cannot fulfill this commitment, I will be faithful to tell you and ask for a termination of this contract. I pledge to you that I will keep in confidence those matters you confide in me and have confidence that you will do the same. My motive is that together we might grow more and more in the likeness of Christ.

Date: _____