



Face to Face

Helping someone grow,
one to one

Shona Cullens

 navigators

if I asked you how you came to trust in Jesus or how you've grown in that trust, I suspect the answer for most would include a person – someone who loved you and got alongside you. Throughout the history of the Church, God has used ordinary people to transform lives.

Can God really use me?

We are prone to believing that God could use us more if we were a different age or in a different stage or context. The truth is that God uses us right where he has placed us, as we are, to be part of his transformation of the lives of others.

There's a world out there full of people who are totally unaware of the goodness and beauty of Jesus. Our go to, in response to this, is often resources – an event, the latest book, an interesting podcast – which are good, but we can miss out on what God longs to do life to life, person to person. Relationships that demonstrate and share God's love and truth. Connections that bring deep transformation.

Why focus on one person at a time?

Think about the life of Jesus. Though he spent some of his time speaking to the crowds, his priority was investing in a few (12 disciples, particularly Peter, James and John) and teaching them to do the same (Mark 1:17).

Paul wrote letters to whole churches, but throughout we read of his passion for helping individuals and his longing to be physically alongside people (1 Thessalonians 2:17). If he

couldn't do it himself, he sent someone else: a Timothy, a Priscilla or Aquila.

God calls us on an adventure of investing deeply in a few people, face to face, and showing them how to invest in a few themselves, so that many will grow in their relationship with Jesus.

What does it look like?

Tamsin's story

'Before I went to university, no one had ever met with me one to one and helped me grow. I knew Jesus and I wanted to live my life for him but I didn't know how to. At university that all changed. For two years on a regular basis, someone met with me one to one. She provided a space where I could be myself, where I could share, ask, discover and grow. She helped me understand more about the life Jesus wants me to live and shared her own walk with Jesus with me. She also reflected the love and grace of God to me. Having that space, care and help resulted in significant growth. It transformed me.'

Getting alongside someone one to one to help them grow is not about having particular skills or superior knowledge. It's about inviting someone into a relationship that is marked by openness and a focus on Jesus.

God has given you everything you need for this adventure.

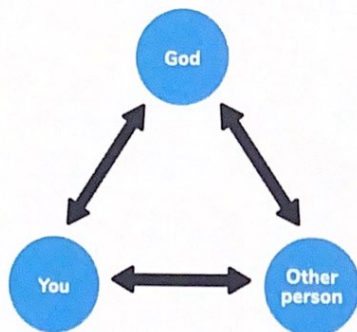
How does it work?

'God is constantly active in our relationships. When you start investing in someone one to one, it is never just you and another person; it is God at work in you and that person.

It is God helping and equipping you by his Spirit. He will also deepen the other person's understanding, love and trust of him. He is the source of transformation (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

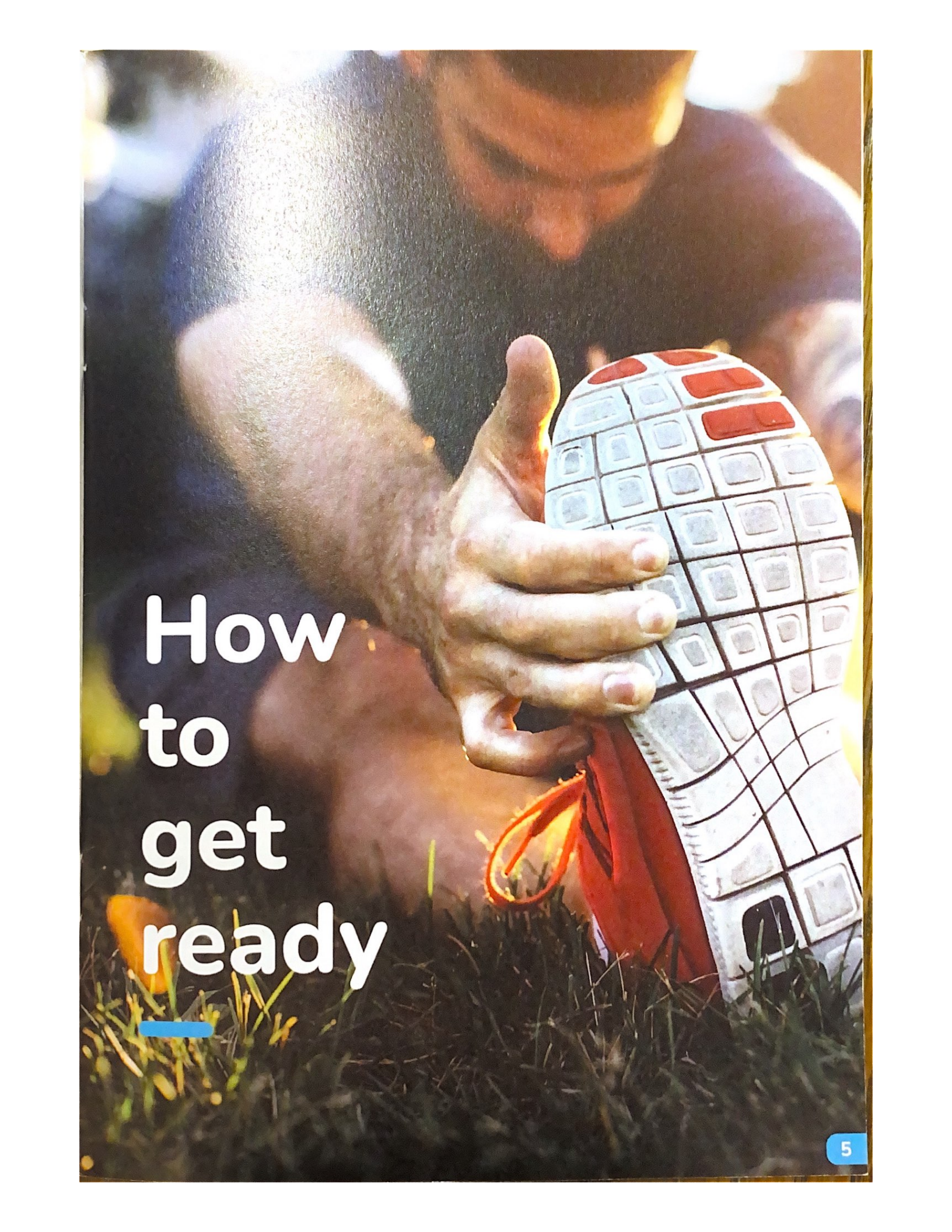
It is you deepening your friendship with Jesus and committing to help someone flourish in theirs as well (Philippians 1:4-7).

It is the other person being willing to learn and wanting to grow in Jesus (Colossians 2:6-7). This process is also preparing them for getting alongside another willing learner.



If you take God out of this triangle, what are you left with? A good relationship, yes, maybe even some helpful therapy, but it remains a human-centred relationship. True transformation through relationships happens as we realise that God is in the picture. God is at work in me and the other person, and as we look to him we are both transformed into his image (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Face to Face sets out a framework, but do not feel confined by it. Meeting one to one with another person is founded on a living relationship with Jesus, which means it is dynamic, not 'one size fits all'. Let God guide you by his Spirit.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a large, white, grid-patterned object, possibly a prosthetic limb or a large toy. The object has red accents and is being held in a grassy field. The person is wearing a dark shirt. The text "How to get ready" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

How
to
get
ready

A one-to-one is not primarily about us and our contribution or even about the person we are helping and their progress. One-to-ones are about developing a relationship with Jesus and fully submitting our lives to him. So we prepare by focusing our heart on Jesus.

Getting ready to ask

- **Ask Jesus** to guide you and to help you know who to meet with.
- **Don't ask just anyone.** Ask someone who is seeking to grow.
- **Don't ask everyone.** Start with one person and go from there. If you meet with too many people you won't have the time or resources to be able to invest in them.

Top tip

Don't just ask people you naturally get on with or who are like you. Ask the people the Lord lays on your heart.

'Where's your man? Where's your woman? Where's that one for whom you are pouring out your life to help them walk with Christ?'

Dawson Trotman
founder of The Navigators

Getting intentional

Pray

Depending on God in prayer is the foundation for meeting one to one with someone. Just like Jesus, we need God's help (John 8:28, John 15:5), so spend time with him, speaking, waiting and listening. Be energised and empowered by his Spirit. 'Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always' (1 Chronicles 16:11).

Prepare to get personal

Jesus shared his whole life with his disciples – his sufferings, strengths, joys and sorrows. Paul did this too: 'Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well' (1 Thessalonians 2:8). Sharing your whole life, including the mundane bits, requires wise vulnerability. It may be awkward and uncomfortable at times, but if you want to help someone walk with Jesus every day, they need to see you do that.

Plan

Consider where this person is on their journey with Jesus (see opposite page) and how you might best serve them. Ask them what they would find helpful. As you depend on God, ask him to give you direction. God knows this person intimately and is the greatest authority on them (Psalm 139:1).

Where are they on their journey?

- **Evangelism**
If they aren't a Christian, help them encounter Jesus and see what he is like, to become a believer.
- **Establishing**
If they are a young Christian, help them to follow Jesus day by day, to know him better and to understand what life with him looks like, to become a disciple.
- **Equipping**
If they are already established, help them to grow in love and to get alongside others to share Jesus, to become a labourer.
- **Sending**
If they are already helping others to grow, help them teach those people how to get alongside others, all the while going deeper with God, as they go out into the harvest field.

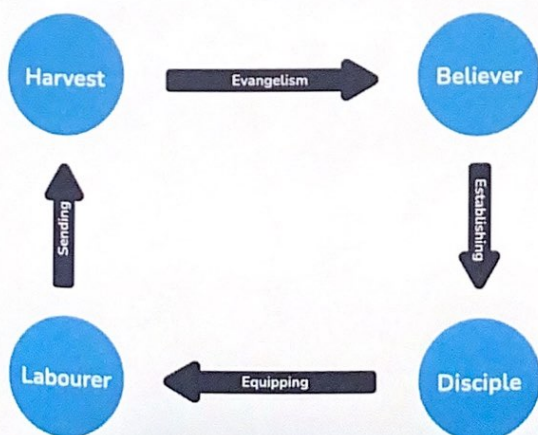
Ideas for resources for each stage are given at the end of the booklet.

Getting ready to meet

- It often helps to plan a regular time to meet. During each meeting, confirm the plan for the next time you'll meet.
- Consider where you'll meet, ideally a public place where you can easily talk, read and pray. (See the safeguarding guidelines at the end of the booklet.)
- Keep in touch in between meetings.
- Expect God to work.

Top tip

Mix it up with less formal meetings such as meals, walks, sports or games, especially at the beginning as you develop your friendship and trust.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a yellow t-shirt, is seated at a dark wooden table. She is looking down at an open book in front of her, with her right hand resting on her chin. On the table, to the right of the open book, is a closed dark brown Bible with 'HOLY BIBLE' printed on its cover. Next to the Bible is a black reusable coffee cup with a white logo. The background is softly blurred, showing a dark chair and a small potted plant on a shelf. The overall lighting is warm and intimate.

Getting started

Form a friendship

Before diving into the deep end, it is good to spend time getting to know each other. This fosters trust and enables you to better serve them. Do something fun together, ask about their passions in life and their background, invite them to share about how they came to follow Jesus and share your story with them (bearing in mind the safeguarding guidelines).

Top tip

For some people, a coffee shop is not the optimal environment for meeting one to one. Doing life shoulder to shoulder rather than face to face might be more beneficial, such as going for a walk, playing sport or watching a film.

It's so great to be able to talk to and about God, but we must be careful not to create a sacred-secular divide. God is interested in all areas of our lives and is Lord over every part. After all, 'in him we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28). It is normal and natural to talk about other things.

Ask questions about:

- Their morning/day/week
- Their hobbies, job, social life, sports, etc.
- Things you have previously talked about, such as important events

Ask open questions

This skill takes a lifetime to learn, but be assured the Holy Spirit will lead and guide you. A good question fosters understanding, brings things into the light and gives direction. It helps the person you're meeting with dive deeper. The best questions are open rather than closed, inviting conversation.

Helpful questions

- What do you sense God might be saying or doing in this situation? (This takes the focus off you and your ideas and puts it rightfully on God and his wisdom.)
- How are you finding loving God at the moment? How are you experiencing his love?
- How are you finding spending time with God?
- What is distancing you from Jesus? What is helping you draw near to Jesus?
- How are you seeking to share Jesus with others?
- How are your relationships with others?

Top tip

What helpful questions have you been asked or have you heard someone else ask? These might be good questions for the person you are helping.

Listen well

Always 'be quick to listen, slow to speak' (James 1:19). Why? Because 'the purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out' (Proverbs 20:5). When we listen, we create space that the other person can fill and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, they can discover what is in the depths of their heart.

Ways to listen

- Show you're listening by your body language, eye contact and affirming noises (umms and arrhs).
- Embrace silence – God is at work in it.
- Reflect back to them what they have said and clarify what they mean.
- Listen with humility – don't try to fix them.
- Put your phone away and on silent.
- Be present and trust the Holy Spirit to guide the conversation and give you the words to say.
- If possible, meet in person rather than online to communicate more fully.

Ways we 'listen' that aren't really listening

- **Pretend listening**
You look like you are listening but you aren't actually taking anything in.
- **Playback listening**
You are able to repeat back to them what they have said but you haven't taken it in.
- **Part listening**
Your own thoughts intermingle with what's being said so you only partly hear them.
- **Predictive listening**
You stop listening in order to think about what you might say or panic about not knowing what to say.



A note on mental health

We want open and honest conversation. If they share about struggles that you aren't qualified to help with, don't panic. Refer them to a GP, counsellor, etc. Continue to walk beside them if you feel able, but remember that it is not your job to fix them.

Consider God's Word

Engaging with the Bible together brings real depth to a one-to-one. For 'the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword' (Hebrews 4:12). It brings transformation.

Here are some ways to look at God's Word together:

Study a book of the Bible

You could start with one of the Gospels or one of Paul's letters. Ask questions like:

- *What does it say?* Read, underline, annotate, note down questions.
- *What does it mean?* Use context, cross references, a dictionary or a commentary to answer your questions and discern the passage's meaning.
- *What difference does it make?* What might God be saying to you both through the passage? Consider what you might do as a result.

Work through a topical Bible study

- *Choose a relevant topic.* Look up places in the Bible that refer to the topic and words associated with it (websites like Biblehub, Biblegateway and STEP Bible are helpful).
- *Make notes* on what the Bible says about the topic.

- *Summarise* what you have discovered.
- *Pray* about how God wants to use this in each of your lives.

Do a Bible read through

You could use a Bible reading plan and read some sections aloud together and some separately, discussing as you go.

Memorise and meditate on verses

Learn to hide God's Word in your hearts by helping each other learn and practise Bible verses.

Look at a Christian book together

There are some great, biblically based books that would be helpful to go through together.

Top tip

As you get to know this person, prayerfully discern their gifts, struggles and areas they desire growth in. Use this to help you choose which scriptures or books it might be good to work through together.

'I am here at your side, let's talk this over, let's consider how we can get in on everything God is doing.'

Eugene Peterson

author of *The Message*

Engage in prayer

It is good to pray with those you meet with. You can show that God cares about all things by praying into some of what comes up in your time together, whether big or small. It may feel awkward to begin with but eventually it becomes normal.

You could hold off for the first few meetings, while you both become more comfortable with each other, especially if you don't know them well yet.

Encourage them to pray too; it is easy to get into a pattern of only you praying, but it's so important for them to engage with God personally. Praying with them gives them an example of how to pray and encouraging them to do it with you gives them space to grow in prayer.

Them praying for you is also an opportunity for vulnerability, to show them that no matter how long we have walked with Jesus we still need prayer.

'Prayer is Christ's invitation to an intoxicating relationship in his promises, presence and power. It is a gift that keeps us walking on water with Christ in all life's storms. It is an exciting opportunity to join Christ on a faith adventure in everyday life.'

Bernard Dishman

national student leader for Navigators UK

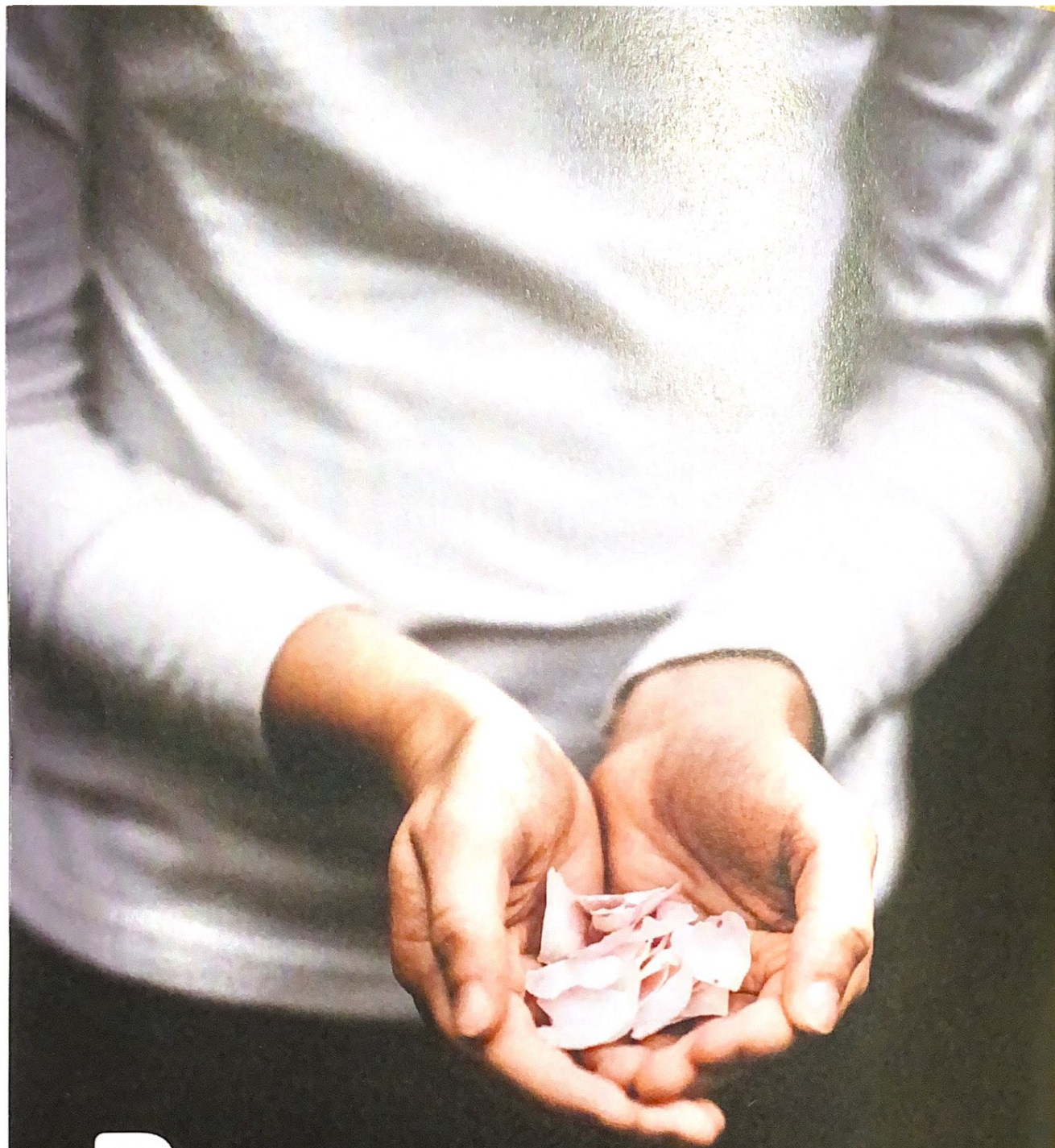
And when we share this kind of an adventure within our one-to-ones, we open the door for God to work deeply.

Top tip

After your one-to-one, you may want to make notes on how it went, things you might want to remember they said, prayer points. Think ahead to next time, about what you might want to do as a result?

Ben's story

'Everyone is different. Some people love coffee shops, others love adventure. Some like to meet at the same time and place every week, while for others the relationship does not feel genuine unless it's slightly unplanned. During some one-to-ones, I always read the Bible, and in others it was not always planned and rarely happened. I once met with someone and we didn't really have anything to say. I suggested we pray and he agreed, so we prayed and carried on with our day. I consider that meeting memorable and valuable – despite not knowing what was achieved. In love, we can consider the best environment for the type of person and type of chat, but we can't always choose when 'break through' moments might come. I want to carry the same expectation that God will be at work in both the mundane and set apart meetings. I never quite know what will happen, but I do know that if I set the time aside and bring it before God, that he is with us, and at work in us by his Holy Spirit – whether watching football, walking on the beach, serving together, or sitting face to face down the pub with our Bibles open.'



Pass
it on



You are limited in how many people you are able to meet up with one to one. In order for the Great Commission to be fulfilled, the buck can't stop with you. An essential part of meeting one to one is encouraging and helping the person you meet with to do the same with others. When Paul walked alongside Timothy, he encouraged him to walk alongside others, who would in turn do the same. He said, 'the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others' (2 Timothy 2:2).

Here is a simple way to pass it on:

- **Tell them why**

Explain to them why one-to-ones are a great idea: to enable someone to live the life Jesus has for them. Share stories of how different one-to-one friendships have shaped you.

- **Show them how**

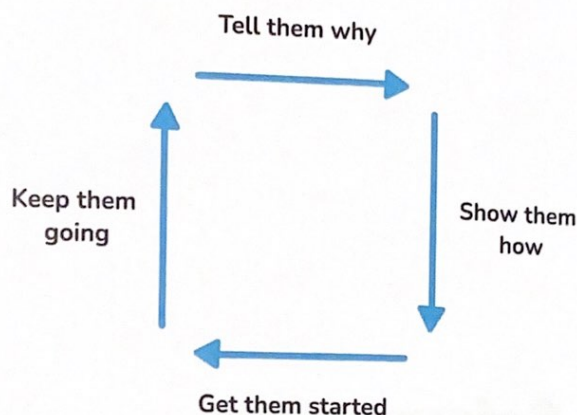
Much of what someone learns from you comes from observing and imitating what you do. Make it easy for them to copy you by doing things with them, such as spending time with God together, doing Bible study, memorising Bible verses, and praying. Let them see how you share your story and listen well.

- **Get them started**

Give them this booklet. Help them think through who to ask, how to ask and what they might do with that person. Pray about it with them.

- **Keep them going**

Provide them with space to process how their one-to-one is going. Pass on helpful resources and pray with them about it.



'It may be slow, building into a few lives at a time, and it may take years to see them become well established in life and service, but it works. That is the wonder of generations: they reproduce.'

Brian Blacklock
author of *Pass the Baton*

Meeting one to one is a privilege that God has entrusted to us, out of his immense love. He helps us along the way and enables us, for he 'is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us' (Ephesians 3:20). His Holy Spirit is with us.

Safeguarding guidelines

Sometimes the people we meet up with are vulnerable and we might not know it. Care needs to be taken to protect them and you.

Consider what wise boundaries need to be put in place. Here are some areas to think through:

- Transparency: Could you meet in a public place, rather than behind closed doors?
- Accountability: Could you let someone else know about the one-to-one (without sharing details)?
- Confidentiality: What expectations could you set? If you have any concerns about someone's welfare or mental health, don't hesitate to seek professional help.
- Group: If you have hesitations about the intensity of a one-to-one, would a group of three work better for that person?
- Contact: What amount of time spent together might be considered excessive? Do not have any physical contact, other than what is initiated by the other person, is honourable and you are comfortable with.
- Recording: Don't record your times together or put photos up on social media, except with prior permission.



Shona Cullens

Author

Shona co-leads the Navigator student ministry in Stirling, Scotland, and has helped many people grow through one-to-ones. She is a musician and she and her husband Duncan compose and sing original worship songs. She also enjoys long walks with her dog Barney.

Contributors

Shona wrote this booklet using materials developed by a range of Navigator one-to-one leaders as inspiration. Contributions came from Navigator Reps and Associates across the UK with a variety of ministry expertise, including Darren Jackson, Rosalyn Boydell, Bernard Dishman, Colin Gillies, Tim Yearsley, Mike Spencer, Ted Pilling, Mike and Chris Treneer, and Derek Leaf.