

## THE ROLE OF THE SPONSOR

The sponsor serves the position of a mentor. The sponsor is there to support and encourage, not to direct or dictate. Each of us has our lessons to learn and our own personal experiences to move through in this lifetime. The sponsor realizes the uniqueness of each person's journey and is careful not to take on karma for judging or initiating unsought changes in another's life. The sponsor is there to assist the new member in church related issues as the person so requests or as appropriate.

Some areas in which the new member would seek out the sponsor are:

- To answer questions on Spiritualism
- To get insights on Guide/Teacher contact
- To request an alternative interpretation of a message received
- To gain a greater understanding of the responsibilities of the Board Offices
- To help the prepared individual seek an elected position on the Church Board
- To get encouragement or objective input on the new member's path
- To receive support and friendship during difficult times (illness or transition)
- To receive encouragement in their personal spiritual development

Some areas in which the sponsor would seek out the newer member are:

- To encourage the newer capable and prepared member to volunteer to participate in presenting the Sunday service, for example, to chair the service, to do the prayers for the service or to provide healing work before the service
- To encourage the newer member to volunteer for committees
- To encourage the newer member to share their strengths and knowledge with the church body
- To be of assistance to the mentor in some church related activity or project

The new member needs to realize that no one person has all the answers and that we are all in the school called "Earth Life" because we have not yet perfected ourselves. Ultimate responsibility for our path lies within us. Having a sponsor does not provide one with an excuse for action or non-action in our lives.

Both the new member and the sponsor need to remember that this is not a child – parent relationship. The new member is, in truth, responsible for his or her own development. The sponsor is not the all-knowing, always correct leader. The concept of sponsorship is one of providing a connecting link to a body of likeminded people, a starting point to enter a community. If viewed from this perspective, the relationship will provide much growth for both individuals and, hopefully, serve as the basis for a longstanding friendship.

Thoughts from Melina Valdejo & Reverend Deborah Ann Bourbon, R.N.  
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