



Women's
MINISTRY GUIDE



Introduction

Biblical Womanhood

Lori Moody

Elisabeth Elliot said, “In order to learn what it means to be a woman we must start with the One who made her.” In creation, we see God’s heart and his hand. His heart was yearning to complete his creation; and to add the finishing touch, he created woman. He hand-fashioned woman in his image. The world tells you the way you should look, live, and act; the Bible tells you something else. Biblical womanhood is about knowing and understanding your unique role as a woman.

We are more than what is seen with the eye; we are body, soul, and spirit. According to John Piper, biblical womanhood “is a distinctive calling of God to display the glory of His Son in ways which would not be displayed if there were no womanhood. If there were only persons with no distinct gender, then God’s glory would be diminished in the world.... When God described the glorious work of His Son as the sacrifice of a husband for His bride, He was telling us why He made us male and female.”

As we live on the earth in his likeness, we are an illustration of who he is to a lost and dying world. Our worth, our purpose, our hope, and our calling are found in the Word of God. In accordance with these truths, let us go forth as an army of women, seeking to live out his truths at home and in ministry.

This guide was written by women just like you who love the Lord, their families, and their churches. We pray God will use it to help you as you lead women. We are not proposing a “paint-by-number” way of doing women’s ministry, but models and examples from women who have done it. Let these women mentor you, but let God guide you.

Remember that ministry is the overflow of your own personal relationship with Christ. It’s not about having the perfect event, the cutest decorations, the perfect family, or the most modern home. God is more concerned about whether we abide in him than about what we do.

Chapter 1

Building and Maintaining a Women's Leadership Team

Laura Taylor

While self-reliance is hailed as a virtue in our society, God wired us for something very different within the arena of kingdom ministry. He created his church to function as a body cohesively working together, with each person having a God-ordained role to play. For many of you in the trenches serving the women in your church and community, this is often more an ideal than a reality. But take heart in the fact that you don't have to be a one-woman show. God longs to see you gather the right cast around you so together you can be more effective for his glory than you could ever be alone.

Realizing a Need

Many of you serve and lead faithfully, but you are all alone. Finding people to help, much less serve consistently on a leadership team, is difficult. If this is your situation, guard your heart

carefully. Perpetually serving in a state of “aloneness” can lead to pride, frustration, anxiety, resentment, and eventual burnout.

Spend some time asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the reasons for your “aloneness” in ministry. The Spirit may confirm that this is a season which will soon pass as fresh leaders step forward. However, you may also need to do some tough self-checks. Have your past actions somehow hindered present service? Have you failed to let people lead once they were given a task? Called countless time-consuming and ineffective meetings? Planned ministry around a calendar rather than a mission? These are just a few actions that can derail a leadership team and leave you sitting alone at the ministry table. If and when the Holy Spirit reveals a truth about your leadership approach or actions, receive it and learn from it as you begin looking for your leading ladies.

Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit (Jeremiah 17:5–8 NIV).

While it is biblical for us to serve within the context of community, we must remember to turn to God rather than people as our main source of strength and ministry guidance. Staying connected to him allows us to serve out of the overflow of his work in our lives and ensures we are never really alone in our kingdom service.

Looking for Team Members

God's design is that we serve like a body, each working together to glorify the Lord. The body is made up of members who are given gifts and abilities to work together in ministry (1 Corinthians 12). Ephesians 4:11–32 encourages us to have an attitude of humility and gentleness, working together in love. These passages give us guidelines for building our leadership team.

Most of you understand the dangers of serving alone and are not doing so by choice. Your struggle revolves around finding the right team members to join you in the journey. So what characteristics should you look for in your next leading lady?

***Christ called those who were willing to follow his lead.** (Matthew 4:18–22)

Look for a woman who is wholeheartedly seeking God and following the Spirit's direction in her life. Her ability to trust God's authority is a reflection of her ability to trust your authority as well.

***Christ called those who were willing to make sacrifices.** (Luke 18:18–30)

Seek a woman who has removed the idols of materialism and frivolousness from her life which can so easily cloud one's perspective. Does she see the needs of those around her? Is she willing to go above and beyond what is comfortable or convenient to meet the need?

***Christ left us with the Holy Spirit and gifts.** (Galatians 5:22–23, Ephesians 4:11–12,

I Corinthians 12:14–18) Look for women with various spiritual gifts and God-given abilities who will make a complete team. Consider those who use their gifts in the body for God's honor. Not all of them need to be teachers or hostesses or organizers.

Good questions to ask:

- 1) Is she passionate in her walk with God?
- 2) Is she known as a woman who guards her tongue, speaking only what is helpful for building others up?
- 3) Is she fulfilling her God-given responsibility in her home?
- 4) Does her schedule/season of life allow for this commitment?
- 5) Is her family supportive of her involvement?
- 6) Does she currently cultivate relationships with other women?
- 7) Do her spiritual gifts and abilities fit the job?
- 8) Does she work well within a team?
- 9) Does she have a servant's heart?
- 10) Do her beliefs correspond with those of the church leadership?

These questions are not the ultimate litmus test for leadership, but they do provide a solid framework to help you see a more complete picture of a woman's life and walk with the Lord.

Recruiting Team Members

Before you officially ask a lady to join your team, consider following the action plan.

- 1) *Pray for God to reveal to you his vision and mission for this team.* Ask what focus areas should be within the ministry team. Sample focus areas are discipleship, fellowship, special events, missions/outreach, and communications/publicity. Developing focus areas ahead of time will help you pray more specifically when searching for a new team member, in addition to providing a quantifiable area of responsibility for the woman who eventually fills the position.
- 2) *Pray about those who would be best suited to carry out the different focus areas.* Allow the Spirit to open your eyes to someone outside your normal circles who could be the perfect addition to your team. Avoid your natural tendency to seek out only your friends or those you are comfortable with. Observe the spiritual gifts of women considered for the team. For example, someone with the gift of hospitality would be an asset in planning gatherings.
- 3) *Ask God to go before you and prepare the hearts of those you will ask to serve.* Ask the potential “leading lady” to spend significant time in prayer before responding. When a response is given after a season of prayer, celebrate the answer, regardless. If the answer is yes, you now have a team member who has been led by the Spirit to join you. If the answer is no, you have a woman who was obedient enough to leave the position open for the person God has truly called to fill it.
- 4) *Keep your team number between three and five women (with maximum of seven) to avoid indecision.*

- 5) *Consider using a prepared team member covenant to outline the length of service (a year is a good place to start) and areas of responsibility.*

Leading Team Members

Once you have cast your leading ladies, steps need to be taken to grow and maintain a healthy team.

- *Search the Gospels for the leadership model Jesus exemplified in leading his disciples. (Resource: *Women Reaching Women*, pp. 80–97)*
- *Pray for the team members individually and collectively.* Allot time within your planning meetings to share personal needs and intercede for those requests.
- *Cast the vision clearly.* It is difficult to minister in the absence of clear direction, so be certain each person on your team knows the ministry's vision. This will help avoid becoming splintered, resulting in activities not aligned with the overall goal.
- *Communicate the "team concept,"* emphasizing that each member is a team player working together to glorify God.
- *Believe in, empower, and encourage each woman to do her best for God.* Spend time investing in her individually, empowering her with an area of responsibility, and encouraging her by providing the tools she needs to lead well.
- *Continually learn, and share the knowledge.* Provide leadership training opportunities. Read, read, read, and then read some more. Find the best resources and then invest in your leaders by sharing the material with them.

- *Earn trust by respecting their time.* Women are busy, plain and simple. You must learn to maximize your time with your leaders. Outline and email the agenda to your team ahead of time. Ask them to prepare for the meeting by reviewing the planned discussion items. Set a beginning and ending time and stick to it. By honoring their time, they will be more likely to honor yours by attending faithfully and preparing well.
- *Hold each other accountable and speak the truth in love.* Growth happens within the context of godly accountability, with the leadership team being a safe environment for truth-telling. Love each other enough to hold each other accountable for responsibilities and the manner in which they are executed. Make sure the team understands that accountability is part of serving on the team. *(Note: This can be incorporated into the team member covenant.)*
- *Live out the kind of leadership you want your ladies to embody.* In John 13, we find an amazing example of servant leadership as Christ washes the disciples' feet. There is no better model for how we should love and shepherd those who choose to serve alongside us.

Developing an effective leadership team is neither an easy task nor an overnight one, but it has the power to radically increase the impact of your ministry.

Resource: *Women Reaching Women*, compiled by Chris Adams

Building Team Leaders

Worksheet

Write down specific areas to seek God in prayer concerning:

God's vision statement for the ministry team

Focus areas of ministry

Possible team members

Compile a list of key questions to ask when searching for a new team member. Use the ten questions provided as a springboard.

Outline the contents of your team member covenant. Sample content may include participating in at least 80% of monthly planning meetings, responding to all communication in a timely fashion, and accepting accountability from the team.

What steps do you plan to take in the coming year to encourage and equip the women on your team?

Chapter 3

Bible Studies: Essential to Women's Ministry

Carrie Bond

Bible studies are the core of a growing women's ministry. As with your personal walk with the Lord, Bible study is essential for growth. Involvement in Bible studies allows women to gain knowledge, mature as believers, learn to apply biblical truths, develop relationships, and have accountability.

Selecting Bible Studies

Before purchasing a bundle of Bible study books, pray through and consider some key questions. If women choose to participate, what do you want their hearts to look like as a result? What desired characteristics or qualities do you want to teach them? What are the needs, expressed or observed, of the women you're ministering to?

Armed with the characteristics or qualities you desire to teach the women, investigate which study or studies would accomplish those goals. It may be something newly published and fresh on the shelf or a long-standing study with a history of teaching foundational truths. Some studies teach both the desired content and how to study the Bible.

Select Bible study authors who present biblically sound doctrine throughout their material. Preview the study before offering it. Who we present/offer as a teacher of God's Word is a serious responsibility.

Types of studies to consider:

- Topical or thematic – Includes topics relating to all women (i.e., biblical womanhood, names of God, character studies) and specific topics relating to certain seasons of a woman's life (i.e., motherhood, wife, singleness)
- Expository or verse-by-verse – A particular book of the Bible or overview of the books of the Bible
- Apologetics – Understanding and defending your faith, what we believe about the Bible, God, and Christianity

Formats of studies to consider

- Print driven – study is done with printed material only, no video
- Video driven – video is essential for the study
- Hybrid or Combination – printed material and video are used

NOTE: If using videos, be aware of the total time you have for your Bible study group in order to ensure you also have time for teaching, prayer, and sharing.

Be intentional about what is taught. Whether you offer one study or five during a semester, know why they are offered and what desired goals you pray will be accomplished in the hearts and lives of women. A schedule of studies can be planned a semester or year at a time to help ensure that specific subjects/qualities are covered.

Choosing Bible Study Leaders

1. *She models life as a growing Christ-follower.* She lives with integrity and transparency; not perfect, but intentional and passionate.
2. *She is an active church member.*
3. *She has a heart committed to learning and leading/teaching others biblical truth,* researching the Bible for answers to her questions.
4. *She is teachable.* She accepts guidance and teaching tips that will equip and encourage her.
5. *She is faithful to fulfill the responsibilities needed for the study.* She studies the material, prays and cares for group members, and meets with the group weekly.

Offer Variety

Consider studies to address and challenge different levels of spiritual maturity: beginning, intermediate and advanced; however, do not label them as such. Some studies are inclusive of all levels.

Vary the study length, from 6-week to 10- to 12-week studies. Longer studies generally need better teachers to maintain the momentum and participation.

Allow for variety of start/end times of studies to accommodate new participants. Various times and days, at church or in homes, and childcare availability will reach different groups of women. Determine which of these variables meets the needs of the majority of the women you are targeting. Allowing for different teaching styles also meets the needs and preferences of a wider range of participants.

Resources for Obtaining Materials

Bible studies can be purchased from Lifeway stores as well as several other Christian stores and websites. Purchasing a leader guide or kit can sometimes become costly with a small budget, so consider obtaining the study from the local Baptist association office's library, SBTC Lending Library, borrowing from another church, or sharing the expense with another church. Limiting the use of video-driven Bible studies can also decrease expense.

Promote Participation

Promotion is an important tool in communicating the Bible studies you will offer. Using a variety of promotion methods is beneficial.

- Printed materials – postcard or business-card size handout, posters in restrooms and classrooms, etc., flyers for target groups of women, blurb in church bulletin
- Video and web-based material – promotional video and information blurb on the church website women's page, social media, and church video announcements; email promotional video and/or information blurb. (Free promotional videos are often available through Internet.)

With committed prayer and biblically-sound Bible studies, you will experience spiritual and numerical growth in your women's ministry. Women are attracted to the Word! Be determined to plant and water the seed of God's Word!

Chapter 4
It's Budget Time!

Marcia Dean

Working in a church finance office, I could cause grown men and women to cry with these words: "It's budget time. I need your budget." It is important for any church and ministry to have a plan of action. We are, after all, stewards of God's money and God's work here on earth. Because I have found that most church members and ministry leaders do not understand how a church budget works, let's first talk about it.

A ministry budget is a projection of the cost of the work God has directed the ministry to accomplish for any given year. Unlike a household budget or a company budget based on a yearly salary or income, a church budget is based on projected income from the tithes and offerings of its membership. This means a ministry may or may not have the needed funds for a project or event, depending on the cash flow for any given month. It is important to check with

your finance office or the person handling the finances of your church to be sure budget money is available to cover your project or event.

Submit your budget on time. Be sure you adhere to the deadlines set by the church's finance team and that you submit numbers that accurately reflect expenses of the programs and events you and the leadership team have planned for the year. It can be difficult to anticipate all the costs associated with an event. Do the best you can, ask for help from people who have experience in budgets and the events you are planning, and don't be afraid to make a mistake. The effort it takes to build a budget will pay dividends when it comes to executing the event or project.

As you prepare the budget for the year, ask God to give you and your leadership team wisdom in planning ministry opportunities. Make sure you and your team are on his plan, doing the work he has directed you to implement. Now it is time to get down to the numbers.

You and your leadership team need to determine what monies will be needed for the coming year to work your plan. Your plan for the women's ministry may include a kickoff event, Bible studies, community missions projects, retreats, special fellowship events, etc. Also, don't forget to ask if you need to budget for team meetings, publicity, postage, etc. Each budget item you list will have an amount associated with it, such as, "Kickoff event – \$200."

You will need to ask several questions concerning each event, project, or fellowship. Not all the questions will apply to each area of your budget, and this is not a complete question guide, but a tool.

- How many participants do you expect?
- If food is to be served, what is your food cost? (including place settings, etc.)
- What supplies are needed for decorations and/or favors?
- What is the cost of the venue?
- Will you have a speaker? If so, what are those expenses (travel, lodging, honorarium, or welcome gift)?
- Will there be a registration fee or will a donation be taken? How will this help offset the expenses of the event, project, or fellowship?

As you and your team become more and more familiar with doing yearly planning, this step will become easier. Keeping good records of your events and their associated costs will pay off for you and your team as you prepare future budgets.

If your women's ministry does not have a line in the church budget, is there a way to plan ways for events and projects to pay for themselves? Some events can pay for themselves with registration fees. Projects can be funded by donations from individuals or Sunday school classes. A project can also be funded with cash donations taken before or during an event. Be creative. See if you can plan events and projects that will be self-supporting.

A budget is a tool to project expenses and then evaluate the actual cost of each event or project. Even if your church does not include women's ministry as a line item in its budget, you should have a budget each year. This will help in several ways:

- showing how well you and your leadership team planned for each event, project, or fellowship
- helping future leadership teams plan more effectively and efficiently
- preparing for the time when the church includes women's ministry in the budget

Don't let fear and trembling come with the words "It's budget time"! Be prepared.

Sample Budget

Budget Item	Current Year	Next Year	Comments
KICKOFF EVENT- FALL	50.00	30.00	
FALL BIBLE STUDY	150.00	150.00	Cost of teaching material. Participants will buy books
SPECIAL EVENT- HOLIDAY FELLOWSHIP	100.00	50.00	
COMMUNITY PROJECTS	150.00	250.00	
SPRING BIBLE STUDY	150.00	150.00	Same as Fall
SPRING RETREAT		500.00	Cost of bringing in a speaker. Other costs covered by registration fees
TOTAL	600.00	1030.00	

Chapter 5
Event Planning 101
Kelley Halsdorf

Events planning can be a big undertaking, but also a big blessing. Looking at all the details at once can be overwhelming. But it's like that old saying, "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time." The steps below will help you navigate the process and actually enjoy the event when it gets here.

1. *Bathe event in prayer.* We all know the importance of prayer in our own lives and throughout the ministry. Pray that God will guide you in choosing the event the women need. Pray for God to lead in recruiting the event team. Pray for a clear mind so no energy, time, or money is wasted. (Philippians 4:6)
2. *Event team.* The women's ministry leadership team may fulfill this function or a separate team of women can be formed to work on this specific event. If the plan is to have the team help with setting goals and the purpose of the event, ask them to begin praying and seeking God's will now. Select members with the talent, skills, and creativity to meet the

responsibilities of the event task. Align team members' strengths to specific roles. The roles could include promotion/publicity, registration, social media advertising, food and beverage, facilities, decorations, counseling/greeters, audio/visual, graphic designer/publisher, sponsorships, and childcare. Ask the Lord to guide in choosing the women needed for the event. (Romans 12:4–5)

3. *Choose the goal.* The church should have an established list of goals or a mission statement for growing the women's ministry. If not, the church probably has a mission statement. Choose one of those goals to help develop a purpose for the event. (Habakkuk 2:2–3)
4. *Determine the purpose/objectives.* Not to be redundant, but prayer is paramount. Before determining the purpose of the event, seek God and his plan for the ladies of the church. A purpose will often generate from women's needs. Some needs may be discipleship, dealing with life challenges, and relationships. The event purpose should align with the goal of the women's ministry. The objective gives measurable goals to accomplish. Below are two examples of a purpose/objective and how they relate to a women's ministry goal. (Proverbs 24:27)

Purpose: Provide ways for women to form new relationships

Objective: Women will leave the event having met at least one new friend with plans to grow that relationship in days/months/years to come

Supported women's ministry goal: Establishing friendships

Purpose: Provide practical instruction for women on balancing life demands

Objective: Women will leave the event with a specific plan, depending on their individual needs, to work toward setting and living out God’s priorities for their life.

Supported women’s ministry goal: Balancing life’s priorities

Ask these questions: What will women to gain by attending this event? How will this event meet women’s needs? The established goal and purpose/objective will help drive event decisions.

1. *Kickoff team meeting* – This is the time to energize the team and either share the vision (the goal, purpose, and objectives for the event) or have the team help with those decisions.

Sample team meeting agenda:

- Open in prayer.
- Make introductions and assign roles/responsibilities (if these have been established).
- Explain the goal/purpose and the event objectives. (These can be determined by the leader in advance or decided upon at the first meeting.)
- Discuss the event objectives. What will each woman walk away with? (See #3 above)
- Determine the event date.
- Discuss budget/costs and how they will be covered.
- Brainstorm the event theme.
- Brainstorm the plan. How will objectives be accomplished?
- Determine the event schedule.
- Assign action items to each team member, with deadlines.

- Establish an effective communication plan.
- Schedule the next meeting.

2. *Determine the event date and location* – Choosing the date and location for the event should be a team effort. Consider when women are the most available. Decide on two or three dates to check against availability on the church calendar. The location might be the church or, for a retreat, possibly a hotel or other “get-away” location.
3. *Consider the cost* – The event cost will impact the event plan. All costs can be included in the event price for each lady. If there is a women’s ministry budget, it may subsidize a portion of the costs, with participants paying the balance. If there is a women’s ministry budget, determine how much is budgeted for the event. Identify all costs associated with the event, which could include the speaker, musicians, food, activities/crafts, games, conference center/facility, equipment rental, give-aways, decorations, etc. Add all the event expenses in the early planning stages to ensure staying within the budget.
4. *Event theme/decorations* – Deciding on the theme is always a lot of fun, but don’t let a fun theme dictate the event. Remember, the goals/purpose/objectives come first. The theme should add interest to the event, something that will attract the ladies’ attention. Ideally, the theme will have ladies talking among themselves about attending the event. Do not give away all your event “secrets,” but do whet their appetites, making them eager to come see what it is all about. There are many resources on the Internet. Search “women’s event themes” if the team is struggling with ideas.

Once the theme is decided, get creative with what kind of decorations will be used or if there will be decorations at all. The décor just provides sprinkles on top of the icing on the cake. The only purpose of decorations is to look pretty, so don't spend too much time or money on appearances. Keep it simple and tasteful. One idea is to enlist ladies to host and decorate a table. (One word of caution—sometimes this grows into a competition, so set ground rules in advance.)

5. *Create the event plan* – Since the goal/purpose/objectives have already been set, this step decides exactly how to accomplish those. For instance, what needs to happen at the event to help ladies form new friendships? Will there be a speaker to talk on the subject? Is there an activity that will help ladies see the importance of friends? Are there games that will enhance these?

This is also the time to think through every step of the event, from setting the date to cleanup. For example—creating promotional pieces/videos, creating sign-up sheets, managing sign-ups (collecting money or just being available with information), name tags, food, necessary lodging, etc. This will help determine the assignments for team members.

It is best to create a timeline to determine what tasks need to be accomplished and when. Multiple technical resources, such as Microsoft Project, Excel, Word, One Note, or pen and paper, are available to create the plan. Choose the one that works best for all. A sample event plan is included at the end of this chapter.

For those who love technology, many online resources are available to help create the perfect event plan and timeline. Search for the [event type] plus [planning timeline] and use this information as a guide to create project plan templates. There are also free online document sharing tools for sharing updates with the team. Give access to each team member to edit or view only once files are uploaded. It is a great way to keep everyone on the same page.

6. *Create the event schedule* – Start by deciding the beginning and ending times for the event. First, put the non-negotiable activities in the schedule (meals, speaker time, and/or an important activity). Add in the more flexible activities/games, etc. Use time wisely to ensure the event purpose is accomplished.

7. *Assign team tasks* – With all plans and details in mind, assign tasks and time goals to team members. For example, the team member who will take care of food and beverages will need to make contact with the food provider(s), depending on the food plan. Set a date for final decisions to be made and ask her to report back to the leader. The timeline that has already been created will help.

8. *Speaker decision* – When choosing a speaker, consider the goal, purpose, and event objectives. Take into consideration the theme, the allotted speaking time(s), costs, and the personality traits desired (serious or funny, lighthearted or intense, etc.).

Search the Internet for Christian speakers who align with the event purpose. Check out nearby resources or even those at the church. There may be women within your church or in neighboring churches who meet the requirements. One option is to have several women sharing personal testimonies that support the event theme. Consider using men to speak from their perspective, which, of course, could be humorous. Or possibly, a panel of men to answer anonymous questions. Consider using no speaker at all if budget or time is limited. Many activities can take the place of a speaker to accomplish the same outcome. Sometimes activities may accomplish the goal much better than a speaker could because of the interaction among the women.

Once the speaker selection is narrowed, listen to them. Most speakers have audio clips on their websites, YouTube, or social media. Also search LinkedIn and other Internet sources for negative reports. Request references. Be sure to check their statement of faith to be sure it is in line with that of your church.

Book early, possibly a year in advance. Read the speaker's contract thoroughly before signing and sending a deposit. Understand all the terms and conditions. It is a good idea to have a specific team member responsible for meeting the speaker's needs. (See "Contacting Speaker" below for next steps.)

9. *Communication with team members* – Maintaining communication can take many forms, but make sure everyone agrees how it will be accomplished. If the decision is to communicate via email, make sure everyone has access to email and emphasize the

importance of checking it regularly. Communication via text message or creating a team page on a social media site are other possibilities. Whatever the means, everyone needs to agree to check for messages and reply. A good rule is for everyone to at least acknowledge they received the communication. This keeps the leader from assuming everyone has the information. They can always get back with the leader later, if required.

10. *Evaluations* – One of the best ways to know if objectives and goals have been accomplished is to have attendees complete an evaluation at the end of the event. Use the objectives (measurable, small goals) in question form to discover if they were met. The questions should be presented in a way that the ladies' answers can be short. Also give them room for any additional comments.

Encouraging the ladies to complete the evaluation can be a challenge. Show them the evaluation form at the beginning of the event so they can be thinking about the questions throughout. Let them know why their input is needed—to help the team learn more about them, to discover plans that worked well, and to determine what changes need to be made for future events. Providing an incentive to fill out the form may be a good idea. The promise of chocolate is usually effective!

11. *Debrief meeting* – Schedule a debrief meeting for the team the week after the event. Taking notes during the meeting ensures that everyone remembers the lessons learned, which helps with future planning. Establish ground rules to solicit open and honest feedback with no finger-pointing and being respectful of others. Start by asking questions

about what went well. Then discuss things to avoid, things to change, topics missed, and personal observations that could help others. (Proverbs 27:17)

There are many types of events. Retreats, kickoff dinners, and Christmas events are usually the most time consuming. An easier event may be a fun, potluck get-together or a craft night.

Regardless of the event, they all require planning. The differences between the events are the elements of each one. A retreat may require lodging and transportation, where a kickoff dinner would not.

Contacting Speaker – Before contacting a prospective speaker, be prepared to provide the following essential information:

- **A description of the event or its purpose.** Is the event a retreat? Bible study? Training? Include the targeted attendees: church-wide, young adults, etc. If there is a title or theme, be sure to include it.
 - *The date and agenda* – Of course, the date is essential. An agenda for the meeting enables the speaker to work within the proposed schedule. (If the team has not determined the schedule, at least be able to tell the speaker the number of times she'll be expected speak, including the time limits for each session.) It is an acceptable practice to expect the speaker to follow the time guidelines and stay within time limits.
 - *Location* – Describe the venue and discuss whether the speaker will drive or fly. If the speaker must fly, clarify which party makes flight arrangements, knowing

the host church will pay travel expenses. Be prepared to provide a good map or driving directions.

Once the Speaker Accepts the Invitation

- *Describe the expected attendees specifically.* If the group has had similar training, topics, or teachings, tell the speaker about this. Include a brief description of the group: ages, anticipated attendance, and any other pertinent information. Discuss any specific goals for the event. Guest speakers want to provide encouragement and something of value for the church, and they should welcome the information.
- *Initiate conversation about expenses.* Be sure the speaker understands the church will pay expenses incurred. If she plans to drive, the church will need to cover her gas/mileage. Travel expenses typically include meals and/or snacks and accommodations, if required. This is the most minimal good etiquette.
- *Fees and honorariums.* Know the financial guidelines of what your church can offer. Some speakers have established fees, so it's important to know if the church has monetary limitations. Be ready to discuss this, and perhaps the fee can be negotiated. Some speakers prefer a love offering. Ask if she has a minimum amount, or readily share what the church is willing/able to pay for this event. Be aware that many guests hesitate to quote a price for accepting an invitation. A love gift is always appropriate, and cash is welcomed! Remember, she has made an investment in the ladies of the church with her time and preparation.

- *Include contact information, inviting the speaker to stay in touch with the leader or team member.* Supply her with a name, address, phone number, and/or email address so she can follow up.

Information for second contact (or included in first contact):

- *Describe what's expected of the speaker.* When acquiring a speaker, know what is needed from her. It is acceptable to tell speakers what the church does *not* want. Realize that the more specific the guidelines, the easier it is for her to do her best job for the group.

Some speakers have a prepared list of topics and/or specific expertise. This may be the reason she was chosen. Some speakers will allow you to request a study or topic prepared specifically for the group.

- *Furnish the speaker the schedule of the event.* Specify the speaker's part of the program.
- *Discuss handouts or listening guides.* Will the speaker be expected to supply handouts or listening guides for their presentation? If so, communicate this early in planning together. Tell the speaker about print deadlines so she has plenty of time to prepare and send the forms.
- *Does the speaker require tech help?* Will she use Power Point presentations, need computer hookups, etc.?
- *Follow up.* A follow-up communication reviewing the conversation and plans for the event helps avoid confusion and will confirm the initial discussion. If communicating via email, ask the speaker to acknowledge she received it and verify that all the included information is correct.

A concluding thought about speakers - *Speakers want to accomplish the task they have been invited to accomplish.* If the speaker reached the women of the group, let her know. Was there an evaluation of the event? If yes, consider sharing the results with her.

Sample Event Plan

One Year Pre-Event

1. Decide the purpose.
2. Set tentative date(s) on the church calendar.
3. Determine the budget.
4. Choose the event team.
5. Contact the first-choice keynote speaker to confirm availability. Choose several alternates in case the first choice is booked.
6. Create an outline of the project plan.

9 to 12 Months Pre-Event

1. Schedule a kickoff team meeting.
2. Decide the theme based upon purpose.
 - a. Develop the theme with branding, message theme/title, event title, activities, decorations, and publicity plans.
3. Have designated team members begin working on time-sensitive responsibilities.
 - a. Promotion/publicity – preparing public message content for speaking (church and Bible study announcements, news, radio, print media, sign-up, etc.).
 - b. Registrations – preparing materials and venue for preregistration and at-the-door registration; survey preparation and results tally.
 - c. Food and beverage – provide menu options within budget to director, enlist caterer or church help for cooking, food delivery, set-up, crowd-control layout, clean-up.
 - d. Social media advertising – publish content on social media, church website, women’s ministry website.
 - e. Facilities – reserve location, lodging, meeting room set-up and take-down.
 - f. Decorations – enlist others to make theme decorations, buy décor within budget, set-up and take-down.
 - g. Counselors & greeters – support the event in prayer through the planning and implementation stages, welcome women to the event, provide one-on-one counseling during the event (Counselors and greeters can be one and the same, but don’t have to be.).
 - h. Audio/visual – reserve needed audio/visual/lighting equipment, ensure equipment is set up and tested and taken down afterward, enlist photographer for event coverage.
 - i. Graphic designer/publisher – create graphics and materials needed for advertising.
 - j. Sponsorships – enlist companies or church members as sponsors to provide give-away items or food/beverage donations, or ask people to provide scholarships for ladies who are unable to afford to attend.

- k. Childcare – identify childcare needs and provide the necessary care through volunteers or paid workers, depending on the budget.

6 to 9 Months Pre-Event

1. Team meeting/event status
2. Finalize the event schedule and develop activities details
3. Finalize event registration cost
4. Finalize registration brochures and advertising plan
5. Meet with publicity, graphic design, and social media and finalize action plan
 - a. Invitation to event – public announcements, mailings, bulletin, Bible study newsletter
 - b. Response card – mobile, online, phone-in, or hard copy
 - c. Signage
 - d. Social media advertising
 - e. Program mock-up
 - f. Agenda mock-up
 - g. Survey mock-up
6. Secure lodging accommodations for out-of-town travel, if needed

2 to 3 Months Pre-Event

1. Team meeting/event status
2. Display signage
3. One-on-one with each team lead about their responsibilities
 - a. Finalize details with all people facilitating the event – vendors, food and beverage, facilities, equipment, enlisted volunteers
 - b. Speaker – obtain information/visuals from the speaker needed for the program, media, necessary equipment, etc.
 - c. Musicians – finalize equipment needs, set-up times, song selection, and visuals
4. Purchase goods for attendees – Name tags, gift bags, giveaways, sponsor’s gifts, etc.
5. Confirm the means in which door registration and collection of monies will be handled.

One Month Pre-Event

1. Pre-event team meeting. This is a less formal meeting, possibly in a home.
 - a. A time of prayer, to hear from the hearts of the team, and of fellowship
 - b. Approve the final agenda and program before going to print
 - c. Finalize the work schedule and responsibilities for the week of the event
2. Implement final week publicity/social media advertising plan
3. Review budget and costs to ensure you are staying on budget

Two Weeks Pre-Event

1. Ensure team members have enough volunteers to complete their responsibilities.
2. Print Handouts – programs, agendas, etc.
3. Facilities – finalize room set-up; confirm lodging
4. Communicate to guest speakers/musicians the number registered, directions to the venue, parking instructions, accommodations, rehearsal times, the name of their host, and provide a copy of the program
5. Submit check request form for guest honorariums

One Week Pre-Event

1. Review final details
2. Provide final head count to caterer
3. Provide final numbers to lodging provider
4. Enlist emergency responders if not already provided by the church/venue
5. Obtain cash-on-hand in case of emergency
6. Obtain checks from church office for distribution during event
7. Meet with leaders and/or volunteers to confirm responsibilities
8. If the facility schedule allows, set up room, decorate, set out programs, etc. the day before

The Event

1. Meet caterer to finalize details
2. Set up registration area
3. Room check; make certain all areas are covered
4. Meet with vendors/speakers/musicians/singers to give final payment

Event-End

1. Collect completed surveys from team leaders and attendees
2. Distribute gift bags and thank-you cards to leaders, volunteers, and church support staff
3. Take down – pack decorations, caterer picks up food, etc.
4. Check facility to ensure clean-up is complete

Post-Event

1. Consolidate invoices/cost
2. Reconcile budget
3. Prepare information for debrief meeting
4. Conduct debrief meeting

Chapter 6

Bridging Generations: Serving God Together

Laura Taylor, Carrie Bond, Leah Holder, and Anita Onarecker Wood

By definition, a generation is a group of people connected by (1) a place in time, (2) with common boundaries, and (3) a common character. The essence of bridging the generation gap is communication and love.

The Love Link

We may plan events for women in different ages and stages of life, but our motive and message must be love for each other. John 15:12 commands us to love one another. Christians are to be recognized by our love for one another. If we speak or encourage other women but have no love for them, it is just an encounter with no meaningful purpose.

“Our challenge today is to take the principles found in the Bible and strategically apply them to the tension and opportunity resident within the generational battles that rage around us.” (*Boiling*

Point: It Only Takes One Degree, by George Barna, Regal Books, 2001) Women are very different today, yet we are uniquely alike. God created it this way. Women live longer; therefore, we face the challenge of bridging differing generations.

Our lives are full of various challenging transitions. We live in an era where women have multiple choices in education and career paths and challenges in clarifying family, gender roles, responsibilities, and expectations. There is a serious erosion of faith threatening our beliefs and stability. Bridging the various generations of women in our local church is an amazing and wonderful opportunity.

Women have a lot to offer one another. God gave each woman one or more spiritual gifts, "...for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12 NASB). Each of us has life experiences and trials God can use in the lives of other women: "... so that we can comfort ... with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:4 NIV). Each woman has unique passions and interests which can impact others.

Every woman has a place and a purpose. She is unique in her generation. As he did with King David, God calls each of us to live and serve him in our generation. "After he [she] had served the purpose of God in his [her] own generation ..." (Acts 13:36 NASB). Every leader and team member, every woman you engage with, has a God-assigned purpose for her life and her generation.

So, let's get started!

Who are the different generations? Today is a most unique time in recorded history. Five generations of adults coexist, almost six. This fact provides churches with unique opportunities as well as challenges. Think of the different generations represented in your congregation. They could be viewed as a lovely floral arrangement. Start with the greenery of the G.I., Civic, Builders (1901–1924) generation. Add some roses with the Silent, Adaptive (1925–1942) generation and daisies of the Baby Boomers (1943–1960). The Busters/Trailing Boomers/Gen X (1954–1965 through 1983) contribute some lilies, joined by the button pom-poms of Millennials (1984–2002). As a finishing touch, tuck in some Queen Anne's lace for those coming behind them (2002–present). Each component is lovely on its own, but its beauty is enhanced by joining all the others. We are better together.

What about evangelism and the generations? The percentage of people who have heard the teaching of the salvation message varies by generation. The younger people are, the fewer there are who have really heard. See the example below from *The Bridger Generation*, by Thomas Rainer.

➤ Born before 1951	65% have heard
➤ Born between 1951 and 1964	35%
➤ Born between 1965 and 1977	15%
➤ Born between 1978 and 1994	4%
➤ Born 1994 to the present	?

What can we do?

Brainstorm with your team about what is possible. How can you bridge generations in your church? Titus 2:3–5 charges us to have relationships with other women across generational lines. It is biblical for older, more mature women to teach, mentor, and encourage younger women. We are to minister to others, encourage one another, and share the lessons we've learned. Elizabeth modeled this when she mentored and encouraged Mary before the birth of Jesus.

Read about Ruth and Naomi in Ruth 1:16–17 and chapters 3–4. This is a biblical example of love that binds generations. Ruth had a genuine love for Naomi, who was of a different generation. She clung to her and determined to stay with Naomi until death, forsaking her own people. These two women were connected by their bond of love. Ruth boldly lived her faith and encouraged Naomi. Later, Naomi guided Ruth in her faith as she prepared for Boaz.

For additional study, consider the story of Moses with Aaron and Hur in Exodus 17:12 and of Paul and Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:5.

Erroneous ideas and biblical responses

- “I’m not old enough yet to do that.” Read 1 Timothy 4:12. No one is ever too young!
- “I’ve already served my time. Someone else can do that.” Consider Acts 20:24. Don’t we want to finish well and encourage others to do so?

- “If they knew what my past was like ...” Every person has baggage and a past. Jesus died to give us new life, and he takes our past and makes it a ministry. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Romans 8:28–29.

List some excuses women offer for not participating. How might you help women in your church realize they can participate and make a difference in God’s kingdom?

Suggestions to begin bridging generations:

- Develop and use your spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:15–16).
- Choose to be supportive toward one another (I Corinthians 12:26).
- Intentionally provide examples of biblical womanhood within your church and community.
- Display authentic examples of “doing life together” (Colossians 1:9–12).
- Model godly principles, such as parenting skills, godly marriages, etc.
- Share practical skills—menu planning and cooking, computer skills, housekeeping, or social media navigation.
- Dialogue about the relevance of God’s Word (Deuteronomy 6:7, Romans 12:2, Psalm 139:14).
- Intentionally study God’s Word together. Share biblical principles in Titus 2 and 2 Timothy 3:16–17.
- Encourage each other (Hebrews 10:24).
- Determine to learn about each other.
- Encourage a willingness to nurture younger generations.

- Keep up with technology and current events/issues.

What ideas do you have? Does your team have?

Don't give up! Galatians 6:9

Younger women, approach women older than you, those whose lives model authenticity & good “products.” Take the initiative to begin the conversations.

Older women, approach younger women in whom you see the spark of youth and who have skills to enhance your life. Let her know you need her! You initiate getting together.

Possible results of bringing generations together - Bringing generations together establishes an army of godly women who are surrendered to him. They believe and they pray they will have an incalculable influence and impact in their homes, their churches, and their culture/community. Will you be one? Will you and your team lead women in your church toward this goal?

Read Scriptural admonitions from Psalm 40:3 and Ephesians 3:20–21. This says we will make a difference! Women uniting in a local church allows the example of biblical womanhood to be taught and caught—to the glory of God.

What other good results are possible? List them here.

Recommended Team Activities

Review these questions with your women's ministry leadership team:

Is every generation of women represented on our leadership team?

What gaps do we have, and how will we address this need?

Identify who might be added to benefit your team.

Engage your leadership team.

Provide an index card for each woman. Ask her to write a prayer need, then ask her to partner with a woman from a different generation. Pray together in pairs, asking God to bridge the generations of your church and show you how to reach out to your community.

Remember! This will forever impact you, your relationships, your church, and your community for his kingdom and glory.

Some practical guidelines to help connect generations

For leaders:

1. Ask God to open your eyes and your heart to younger and/or older women with the intent of reaching out to them.
2. Be a student of that person or generation and how God may use you to minister to them.
3. Be genuine and authentic. Never see women's ministry as a project but as individuals to love.

When planning events:

1. Are there skills the younger generation would be interested in learning from the older?
2. Could the younger generation teach the older generation some useful things (texting, computer skills, cell phone use, social media)?
3. What common ground could be used to connect the age groups? Cooking? Hobbies? Exercise/health interest?
4. Encourage or arrange for different age groups to attend an event and set groundwork for them to reach out to those in a different generation.

Ideas to bridge the gap:

1. Host a dinner for the older ladies (maybe widows). Have the young mothers and their daughters serve the meal.
2. Plan a ministry project to be done together.
3. Arrange a panel of women from different decades/generations. Allow the audience to ask questions of each age group in order to become better students of one another.
4. Plan mother/daughter events: retreats, luncheons, outings.
5. Adopt a grandmother, a college student, or young mother.
6. Arrange family mission trips.

What should we keep in mind when reaching out to younger women?

1. *Be a Spirit-walker.* This generation is particularly turned off by hypocrisy and are watching you closer than you may think. If you stay in step with the Spirit in your daily life, young women will be more receptive to hearing what you say.
2. *Be authentic and transparent.* “Little Miss Perfect” will not effectively reach young women. Be open and honest about your past failures and your current struggles. Sure, you will need to use wisdom regarding the time, place, and details you share, but don’t be afraid to expose your scars. Your story will help some young woman avoid making the same mistakes and encourage those who have already experienced similar wounds.
3. *Be persistent.* Many younger women are not as familiar with Christianity and “church traditions” as women in previous generations. Thus, they may feel less comfortable and more skeptical. If these women aren’t receptive to your initial efforts, don’t give up! Lovingly let them know they are always welcome in your women’s ministry.

Recommended Resources:

- *Transformed Lives*, Chris Adams
- *Women Reaching Women*, Chris Adams
- *The Millennials*, Thom Rainer
- *Jesus on Leadership*, C. Gene Wilkes
- *Understanding Spiritual Gifts*, Kay Arthur
- *How Do You Walk the Walk You Talk*, Kay Arthur
- *True Woman*, Susan Hunt

- *One Church, 4 Generations*. Gary McIntosh
- Online Resources, such as: <http://www.lifeandleadership.com/ministry-resources/generations-multi-generational-issues-in-churches.html>

Chapter 7

Assimilation: Helping Women Connect

Anita Onarecker Wood

The dictionary defines assimilation as “a process of social interaction that absorbs new people and brings them into harmonious relationships with the existing group.” It enables people to join in or participate in a group, enlarging the existing group or ministry. It is an intentional process designed to help integrate newcomers into the heart of the group.

Assimilation affects the entire congregation. When a new person is not brought into the group, she feels rejected or snubbed. When people feel unwanted they tend to move on. Has this happened in your church or group? We honor God by obeying his most basic command to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). Assimilating newcomers requires a ministry mindset that says, “Welcoming others is *my* personal responsibility.” Women’s ministry leader, this begins with you.

Women's ministries grow as leaders embrace the process of helping others connect. Women who are new to the church or newly interested in participating with women's ministry need an open door, a welcoming pathway into the group, and someone to draw them in.

Women want connections. When women attend a new church, they want to be welcomed. They seek new, godly friendships. They want to work and serve God together. Does your women's ministry team have an intentional plan for welcoming newcomers? What if a new church member has experience serving in her previous church? Do you embrace her and welcome the opportunity to tap into her skills? Are you always willing to allow newcomers to participate with your ministry?

Be Intentional. Make a plan for welcoming and allowing new people into your ministry or church. Establish measurable goals to achieve assimilation. How do you welcome new participants? Do you establish contact records so you can follow up with visitors and new attendees? Do you specifically invite women to join or participate in your activities? One goal of women's ministry is helping women connect with one another, so brainstorm ways to accomplish that in your church. Be intentional as you welcome a woman who is new, walking alongside her as she becomes acquainted with your church or ministry.

Establish a specific responsibility/position to oversee assimilation efforts. Have a connections director as part of your leadership team to focus on newcomers who want to understand the heart of your church and need help learning how to plug in. Without our

intentional help, it is unlikely that many new members will persevere long enough to become active participants.

Begin by answering the following questions:

- Do you know what it's like to visit your church?
- Would newcomers describe your group as friendly and easy to penetrate?
- Have you recently asked guests or new members to tell you about their welcoming experience?
- Is it easy for a new woman to become part of your group?

Discipleship and informal mentoring are part of assimilation. This is an ongoing process as we continue to notice, reach out to, and encourage women around us. We want to create an environment where a woman feels accepted and her confidence grows. Leadership means we help others grow to a place of ministry.

Discuss this question with your team or group of leaders: What does a women's ministry look like when it is hard to break in? Galatians 5:15 says when a body/church/ministry turns inward, it consumes itself. A guest at one church said it this way: "People at this church are really friendly, just not always to guests. It's like friendliness is happening all around me and church members just hope some friendliness splashes on me too." Help newcomers find a way in. Provide an open door for new people to walk through.

Assimilation means seeing other women with God's eyes. It means being open to his leadership as you engage in conversations. *Assimilation = Connection.*

A women's ministry leader observed a woman sitting alone, a downcast expression on her face. The leader approached her and through light-hearted conversation, sought some connection with the guest, listening for something they shared in common. Tears glistened in the woman's eyes as she asked for prayer for her son. Now feeling comfortable, she shared her heartbreaking story. When she finished, the leader gently asked if they might pray together. The guest left the service with a sense that someone took time to listen and people at that church cared.

This is ministry among women. This is women in ministry.

Connection and assimilation are possible. Here are suggestions of how to begin.

- **Pray: Ask God to help you see the women around you.** Ask God to open your eyes today to see with his eyes. Who did you see? Now that you have noticed someone new, introduce yourself, initiate conversation, and be sure she feels included in your women's ministry. Connections begin with you.
- **Plan: Think about this issue and make plans.** The next time your leadership team meets, brainstorm creative ways to facilitate assimilation. How can you make it easy for new members to belong? Search online articles for fresh ideas. A good online resource is www.lifeway.com. Put "assimilation" in the search bar.

Survey newcomers for fresh ideas of how to assimilate. Without a plan, nothing happens. Formulate a strategy that applies to each woman who joins the church. Have a specific individual or team responsible to accomplish this. Make various contacts through telephone, email, hand-written welcome notes, and personal invitations to women's ministry gatherings. Coordinate with other outreach efforts of your church, making a united effort to facilitate connection.

- **Act: Demonstrate you care.** If you were the new woman in your church, what would you want to know? How would you want to be treated? Communities and churches differ, so plan for people in your area. Offer information before they ask. Be aware of little ways which exclude newcomers. For example, reconsider "insider language," communication only people of your church know and understand (place names that aren't obvious, using first names only, etc.). Be ready to interpret so everyone feels included. Eliminate any barriers that may come between you and the person you seek to help.
- **Remember, women desire connection and want to be included.** Ask God to help you remember a specific time when you were new! Be the friend you wished you'd had then. Continue reaching out.
- **Be real, approachable, and friendly yourself!** Are you interruptible? Women new to the group may seem quiet, and may privately conclude there is no place to contribute to conversations. They may feel uninvited or like they're having to invite themselves in. Make it a priority to speak to visitors and new members, inviting them into conversations, soliciting their thoughts and ideas. Just be the person God created you to be.

- **Evaluate. After three, six, or twelve months, interview people who have come into the fellowship.** This should reveal your effectiveness. Surveys help you see progress or difficulties in your goal of connection.

I hope you find new friends, women who are quick to smile and tell you what a wonderful, loving church you share! God bless you with caring, creative ways to demonstrate love to people in Jesus's name.

Assimilation: Helping Women Connect
Worksheet

Our connections leader is _____.

A first impression of our church is _____ and we accomplish this by _____.

What changes, if any, need to be made? Why?

List ways you currently welcome and connect with new people:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Our women's ministry intentionally encourages women to become part of our group by:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Our Women's Ministry intentionally seeks to see others through God's eyes by:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

We can connect with others. Assimilation is possible. Embrace the process.

Pray.

Plan, then execute that plan.

Act intentionally—encourage, support, and befriend others.

Demonstrate respect. Reach out to newcomers.

Remember, women are about relationships. They desire connections.

Be real and approachable yourself.

Chapter 8

Impact of Prayer

Nancy Turner

When God appeared to King Solomon at Gibeon, he asked, “What shall I give you?” Solomon did not ask for a long life, riches, or vengeance on his enemies; he simply asked for an understanding heart, for wisdom (1 Kings 3:1–14). Every leader should pray for God’s wisdom as she makes herself available to those inside and outside of women’s ministry. “For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6 NASB).

Why Pray?

Our Father knows your needs even before you speak them (Matthew 6:8). So why pray? Prayer is an opportunity to align your will with his. In Matthew 6:10, Jesus not only taught his disciples to pray, “Your will be done,” but spoke those very words himself in the garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:42). Remember, we are joining God in his plans for the ministry, and his will must be done.

Pray Until God Answers

How long should you pray about a matter? Jesus reminds us in the parable of the persistent widow “to pray always and not give up” (Luke 18:1 NIV). In our current microwave age, it is easy to become disheartened when it seems God has not given an answer. How long should you pray about a matter? Continue to pray until God answers.

A prayer journal is an exciting way to see God at work. One method is to write the following three columns at the top of a page:

Prayer Request	Date Prayed	Date Answered
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Remember, even if God says “No,” that is still an answer to prayer. When he says *no*, it is always a *yes* in his grand plan for the believer’s life (Romans 8:28).

Intercessory, Corporate, and Personal Prayers

At one time or another, every believer has probably engaged in intercessory prayer, prayer on behalf of another person. How refreshing and uplifting when you hear someone say, “I have been praying for you.” Also, great care and concern is expressed when someone asks, “How can I pray for you?” A women’s ministry is enriched when sisters in Christ intercede with prayers for one another.

A prayer event is a wonderful occasion to gather women from your church and community. As a group, you can petition God for the needs of your church and community. During the event, you can also divide the women into small groups and have them pray for specific, individual needs.

The leader's personal prayer life is very important. Scripture records Jesus praying alone on several occasions. Hours before daylight, "He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there he prayed" (Mark 1:35 KJV). After ministering to great multitudes, "He himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" (Luke 5:16 KJV). Prior to choosing the twelve disciples, Jesus spent all night talking with God (Luke 6:12–13). Corporate prayer has its place in the body of Christ, but personal prayer must not be neglected.

Private Prayer Requests

When meetings convene or dismiss, prayer requests are usually submitted. If a private request is submitted, it should not be used as an opportunity to gossip. Instead, ask the individual to submit the request to the women's ministry team, and they in turn will decide whether or not to forward the request to the prayer group.

Purpose of a Prayer Group

A prayer group dedicated to praying for the mission and goals of the women's ministry can serve as a great spiritual support to the women's ministry. Prior to making selections for the prayer group, the women's ministry team should observe those women who have a heart for prayer. They are usually the ones who are not embarrassed to pray publicly, who ask others how they can pray for them, and who can be trusted with confidential information. After several names are presented for joining the prayer group, the women's ministry team should earnestly seek God before making final selections.

Whether your women's ministry is in the planning stages or has existed for years, prayer is essential. God, the Creator and sustainer of the universe, always has an open invitation for you to join him in prayer. What a high privilege and honor!

Chapter 9
Loving Our Lost Neighbors

Rockie Naser

Neighbor is a peculiar word. For some it brings happy thoughts of people who played with our kids, shared our joys or sorrows, and loved us like family. On the other hand, some have memories of neighbors who threw wild parties, drank heavily, or were loud and belligerent. To be honest, I've experienced both!

One thing I have to remember is that God loves all my neighbors and those in my community. In fact, he's called me to love my neighbor as myself. When someone asked Jesus who his neighbor was, Jesus launched into the story of the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25–37). Yes, our neighbor is the person living next door to us, but it also is the person who is near us. It can be a lost person at work, the grocery store, the coffee shop, or our recreational activities. God's call to love our neighbor as ourselves is the Great Commandment, not the Great Request.

A woman in ministry shared her story of an annoying neighbor. She avoided her neighbor like the plague because the neighbor family seemed like misfits with a messy front yard and loud, obnoxious kids. After several months of being annoyed by this neighbor, the woman in ministry got a knock on her door, only to discover her misfit neighbor, who proceeded to tell about her newfound faith in Christ and was excited to share it with her neighbor. The woman in ministry told her she was already a believer and on staff at a church. The neighbor look perplexed and said, “Wow, I had no idea you were a Christian.”

Stories like this are deeply convicting to me. You see, I know Jesus and study the Bible regularly, but how often do I tell others about him? It’s not enough that I lead a women’s Bible study. It’s not enough that I have my quiet time regularly. I am still responsible for sharing the gospel with the lost people around me, and I’m responsible for helping other believers fulfill the Great Commission the Lord has entrusted to me.

So how do we fulfill the Great Commission? I believe the critical steps to follow are: first, to do the work of an evangelist; second, to lead by example so women can follow us; and finally, to find a tool that best suits us.

Do The Work of an Evangelist

Listen, friend! We are not excused by the Lord if we teach a women’s Bible study. We are not excused if we volunteer to help out with women’s ministry. We are not even excused if we have a position on staff at church. All of us are entrusted with the Great Commission and all of us are

responsible for fulfilling it. Paul said to Timothy, “But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5 NASB).

Timothy eventually became the pastor of the Ephesian church. He could have told Paul he was really a teacher and did not have the gift of evangelism. Clearly the only way we can fulfill our ministry is to do the work of evangelist. I often tell people that I don’t have the gift of mercy, but that does not allow me to be rude and uncaring towards others. Likewise, God does not excuse me from fulfilling the Great Commission if I do not have the gift of evangelism. We are all called to share, and there is no way around it. We need to go back to the basics. Each one of us is responsible for doing the work of evangelist. No one can fulfill our ministry but us, and that requires fulfilling the Great Commission.

Lead By Example

We need to allow women to follow us. Women will not go anywhere we have not gone first. I recall a time when I did refugee ministry in the Dallas area. I invited a friend to join me and she was hesitant at first. After spending time with me and a refugee family for about six months, she was ready to help a new refugee family on her own. If I had not asked her to join me and modeled the ministry to her first, she would not have gotten involved in it and the refugee family would not have been blessed by her.

I believe there are two types of leaders:

1. *Leaders who say, “Go.”* These leaders want to equip, train, and send people off to do ministry. This leadership style is effective when you are leading self-motivators with a

strong sense of calling to do ministry outside the walls of the church. These people comprise less than 15% of church members. When we follow this leadership model, we will mobilize less than 15% of the women. This is not the most effective way to lead women to do evangelism.

2. *Leaders who say, "Follow my lead!"* These are the leaders who lead by example. They get their hands dirty, have sweat on their brows, and are involved in active outreach ministry. When a leader leads by example and invites others to join her, she will likely mobilize 80% of the women. These women may be mobilized to pray, share their faith, and open their homes to their neighbors, and in a plethora of different ways. This leadership style is the most effective, in my opinion, when it comes to evangelism and reaching your community.

Jesus led by example. He said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19 NASB). Paul led by example when he said, "Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us" (Philippians 3:17 NASB). May it also be said of us that we are leading by example as we reach out to our communities.

Find an Evangelism Tool

The third thing we need to do is find a tool that best suits us. There are many different kinds of gospel presentations you can use. I recommend the one you feel comfortable using, as long as it contains the following elements:

1. *God's holiness.* "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48 NASB).

2. *Man's sin.* "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23 NASB).
3. *God's love.* "The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8 NASB).
4. *Christ dying in our place.* "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him" (Isaiah 53:6 NASB).
5. *Our response in faith.* "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life" (John 6:47 NASB).

If your church has adopted a tool for presenting the gospel, I would suggest that you get behind your leadership and use the presentation they have chosen. If the leadership in your church has not chosen a specific gospel presentation or strategy for reaching the lost, this is what I recommend:

1. *Tea Talk.* Emily Smith and I have developed this resource you can download and use to start neighborhood gatherings. It has everything from simple recipes to invitation cards to ways to pray for your neighbors. To learn more about Tea Talk, go to www.sbtexas.com/teatalk.
2. *1cross app.* This app can be downloaded to your smartphone. It has gospel presentations in several languages. If you have a neighbor from a different culture, you can encourage him/her to watch a one-minute video in his or her own language. Go to the app store on your smartphone and type "1cross."
3. There are other tools on the SBTC website which are free at www.sbtexas.com/evangelism

My friend and pastor in Australia, Peter Rahme, identifies four elements in sharing the gospel—Contact, Connect, Convict, and Convert.

CONTACT. We need to make contact with lost women. We cannot live our lives in a Christian bubble. One friend of mine decided to take her kids to the library for reading time. As a result, she met three Muslim women she is now ministering to by the power of the Holy Spirit.

CONNECT. Make sure you connect with these women on a personal level. They are not your project, but people Jesus loves and died for. Also, don't forget to connect them to the Savior. The only way they will know about the Savior is if you tell them about him. He wants you to connect them to him, his Word, and his people. Don't be afraid to share his Word with them. Invite them to church with you.

CONVICT and CONVERT. It is impossible for you to convict and convert anyone. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. It's his job and not yours. You are not responsible for convicting or converting anyone. So be faithful with the two tasks he's given you. Remember to make contact with lost women and connect them to God's Word, his gospel, and his people. The Holy Spirit will do the rest.

In Luke 15, Jesus shared a parable of a man who left his ninety-nine sheep to find one lost sheep. Jesus shared this story, in part, so we may be women who are willing to leave the ninety-nine people sitting in our pews who know and love the Lord to reach the one who do not yet know

him. He does not want us to abandon the ninety-nine, but to make sure we chase the one who needs to be back in the fold.

May the Lord bless you richly as you do the work of an evangelist and lead women by example to fulfill the Great Commission.

Chapter 10
“Menching”
Mentoring – Coaching
Irma Ramos

I don't know if you have heard about “menching,” a word coined to combine mentoring and coaching. “Menching” a person will turn out to be a very rewarding experience for both people involved. It is a one-on-one relationship begun with the intention of bringing out the maximum, God-given potential of the person within. It involves two people doing life together in a very informal way and could very well lead to a lifelong relationship.

Menching is not:

1. Discipleship (teaching spiritual disciplines)
2. Evangelism (taking the gospel to those who have never heard)
3. Creating a cookie-cutter image of me

In the Bible, we see Jesus's ministry involved discipling, teaching, training, behavior modeling, and mentoring a bunch of men from diverse backgrounds and different walks of life. He saw what they could become in him. He lovingly called them and spent three years with them. He poured himself into them. He taught them how to pray and seek and desire God's kingdom. We will look so much more like Jesus when we are willing to pour out our lives for the benefit and growth of others.

Mentoring someone involves addressing specific problems that need a solution and perhaps also addressing personal habits or practices that need correction. Coaching, on the other hand, means being the trainer who assists with and/or creates a personalized regime. The person being coached will follow this regime to reach her goals. As you go along, you create customized short-term and long-term goals and celebrate each goal when it is reached.

You may ask, "How do I become all those things to someone?" It is presupposed that in your walk with the Lord, you've had experiences and gained the wisdom needed to share with someone. In your years of ministry, possibly you have amassed a wealth of good common sense, organizational skills, and practical Bible knowledge you can share with someone.

Should you approach someone to "mench" who shows great potential? Not necessarily. Dick Innes of ACTS International coined the acronym *FAT* when referring to finding people to mentor. You will need to find a person who is Faithful, Available, and Teachable.

Should you let someone know you want to “mench” her? When you identify someone who is faithful, available, and teachable, definitely yes. You want her consent and willingness to participate in the process, as there will be many questions which require personal answers. Also, you will need to work together in setting her goals and a plan to reach them.

The apostle Paul writes these words to his beloved Timothy (in the Amplified Version): “So you, my son, be strong (strengthened inwardly) in the grace (spiritual blessing) that is (to be found only) in Christ Jesus. And the (instructions) which you have heard from me along with many witnesses, transmit and entrust (as a deposit) to reliable and faithful men (and women) who will be competent and qualified to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:1–2 AMP).

I quote Paul because, in my opinion, he is the greatest biblical example of a faithful mentor and coach to so many outstanding disciples who were vital in establishing and equipping the churches during that first era. These men and women contended for the faith, and therefore we exist now to continue that legacy of faith.

Below you will find a list of questions, taken from Bob Biehl’s book on mentoring, to help you get started with each new person you “mench.” You may come up with your own list of questions as long as they help you toward common goals. If you feel God is calling you and other women in your church into this fruitful ministry, he will guide and equip you.

According to Bob Biehl’s *Confidence in Finding a Mentor and Becoming One*, seven areas need to be addressed:

1. Family and marriage
2. Financial
3. Personal growth
4. Physical
5. Professional
6. Social
7. Spiritual

Questions to work through (also from Bob Biehl) include:

1. What do you see as your top three strengths, in rank order?
2. What ten specific, measurable things do you want to get done before age 65?
3. What do you consider your life's work?
4. What are your three deepest personal needs which make you potentially vulnerable morally, ethically, or legally?
5. Which three people threaten you most, personally? Why?
6. What three people could be your protégés?
7. What is your preferred, ideal, hope-to-have-someday title (president, guru, teacher, friend, etc.)?
8. What three things would you most like to change about yourself *if* you could? Why?
9. What are three things you are most committed to doing before you die?
10. What three things do you feel are the greatest roadblocks in your life?
11. In what three areas would you most like to grow in the next 1–5 years?

12. What 1–3 things keep you from being as close to God as you would like?
13. How do you picture yourself in ten years, ideally?
14. What one subject would you most like to share from your heart of hearts that you have never been able to put into words?
15. What have been your life's milestones? traumas? questions?
16. How would you describe your general style of leading?
17. How would you describe your relationship with each of your immediate family members as you were growing up?
18. What three relational bridges do you need/want to rebuild?
19. Who are your five closest friends? Why?

Books:

As Iron Sharpens Iron, Building Character in a Mentoring Relationship, Howard and William Hendricks

Be There: Making Deep, Lasting Connections in a Disconnected World, John Trent, PhD

Christ Centered Coaching – 7 Benefits for Ministry Leaders, Jane Creswell

Christian Counseling: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality, Gary Collins, PhD

Connecting: A Radical New Vision, Larry Crabb

Jesus Christ, Disciplemaker, Bill Hull

Chapter 11

The Value of Strategic Planning:

Evaluating the Ministry

Jennifer Garcia

What is the value of strategic planning? To have a healthy, strong, growing ministry, you must begin by building a strong foundation. The quality of the foundation will determine both the strength and the size to which it can grow. A ministry built on an inadequate or faulty foundation will never reach the height God intends for it.

While a ministry planning process eventually leads to a ministry plan, it does not stop when the plan is finished. The dynamics of ministry work today ensure that a plan, once completed, will immediately start becoming obsolete. Therefore, it is essential to be prepared to revise the plan accordingly as new information is gathered.

Evaluating your ministry will help you achieve your ministry goals. It saves you money and time by focusing your activities and giving you more control over your finances and daily

operations. It is an ongoing process that is challenging, creative, and rewarding. It may even be fun!

Evaluate? Yes! As women's ministry leaders, one of our goals should be to maintain a standard of excellence. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23 NIV). An annual planning retreat with your women's ministry team is one way to accomplish that goal. This team activity keeps us all focused and fresh in our approach to effectively reaching women in our churches and communities. To move forward, we need to take a clear look at what is behind.

When is the best time to evaluate? The beginning of summer is a great time to evaluate the previous year and look forward to the new ministry year. Generally, all the year's major events, studies, and activities are completed—or things are on a bit slower pace—by the time the school year ends. This also allows your team to project for the coming year prior to the annual kickoff.

Where should we hold the planning retreat? If possible, schedule an overnight planning retreat away from the church campus. You could go to a hotel, a retreat center, or someone's home—wherever you are sure to be able to relax and focus. A location away from the ordinary gives your team a fresh outlook.

How long should the retreat last? If your team can commit to it, an overnight retreat is suggested. This is not a time to rush or to make your time together fit into a one- or two-hour meeting. Your team needs to have sufficient time to evaluate, discuss, dream, and plan. An

overnight planning retreat will allow time to do something else important—play together as a team. Whether you choose fun ice-breaker questions or a planned community-building activity, this time will be invaluable in keeping the team relaxed and fresh.

What kind of preparation should I make before the planning retreat? As the team leader, decide the topics you want to discuss during the retreat. Reviewing the ministry year and asking the Lord for direction will help you prepare a planning retreat guide. Distribute the guide to all team members prior to the retreat so they have time to work through any questions ahead of time. Ask team members to bring snacks to share, and of course, remember to bring the chocolate!

What areas of Women’s Ministry should we evaluate? The short answer is all of them! Because we operate with the principle of excellence, we should always be evaluating what we do, how we do it, when we do it, why we do it, etc. Status quo is not synonymous with effective. Needs change, interests change, and methods change. The way we approach women’s ministry must change so the unchanging message of the power and hope of Christ will be heard. We must be willing to ask the tough questions, even of our favorite events or activities. Some questions to consider when preparing your planning retreat guide:

- Did the women’s ministry events, ministries, and activities line up with the purpose and vision of the church?
- Did our events and activities remain true to the women’s ministry purpose and vision?
- Was our women’s ministry effective? What needs did it meet? What areas need tweaking to be more effective? Do we still need it? Be careful not to keep something just for the sake of keeping it, “because we’ve always done it.” If improvements can make it more

effective, make them. However, if improvements would still not make the activity/ministry/event effective, make the tough decision to eliminate it.

- What about our Bible studies? Evaluation of Bible studies is vital since they are the foundation of an effective women's ministry. What needs do the ladies have which should be addressed? Do we offer a variety of studies—length of study, type of study, season-of-life, different spiritual maturity levels, etc.? Do we need more facilitators? Do the strengths of the facilitators match the studies to be offered?
- What are we doing to “be the church,” to get outside the walls and effectively make an impact on our community? What practical opportunities to reach out to community are we providing the women?

What should we include in the planning retreat? Spend time in prayer for your women's ministry and your leadership team. Pray for God to clearly guide your team and reveal areas of strength and weakness. Ask him for unity of purpose and vision as you evaluate how your women's ministry can best meet the needs of the women in your church and community. Share prayer requests and pray for each other. Prayer has an incredible way of binding our hearts together.

Spend some time discussing your passion for women's ministry and the purpose of the leadership team. Just as you are evaluating and regrouping for the ministry year, it is important to do the same for your leadership team. This is an appropriate time to insert a new leadership tip or skill you want your team to focus on for the new ministry year.

Take some fellowship and fun breaks during your planning retreat. Bring door prizes & goodies for the team. Everybody loves to get a new little treat! Plan a “play time” activity for your team, such as swimming in the hotel pool or watching a Christian comedy DVD. Spend some time laughing together. Your team will stay fresh and energized as you work through the planning guide.

What will be the result of the planning retreat? You can expect an excited team who is ready to lead in the ministries, events, and activities they believe God has directed them to. The calendar for the next ministry year will be filled with relevant things designed to meet the needs of women in your church and community. With one voice and heart, your team will be ready to say, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23 NIV).

The Value of Strategic Planning

Worksheet

Personal Reflection & Assessment:

Does God want me to continue serving on the women's leadership team? Or has God given me a new passion he wants to develop in another area of service?

How did I grow as a leader in the past year?

What area(s) of development do I need to focus on in the next year?

My dreams for women's ministry are:

Ministry Reflection & Assessment:

What strengths did our ministry team exhibit this year?

What weaknesses did we exhibit this year?

Do we need to restructure how we function as a team?

Should we reassign team members to specific areas or redefine job descriptions?

How can we involve more women through a sub-team structure?

What changes would you make if we could have “do-overs”? Why?

Did we stay true to our focus on the five purposes of the church? (discipleship, fellowship, worship, evangelism, and ministry) Were we lacking in any of the purposes?

What does your heart rejoice over from the previous ministry year?

Where did you see God at work in the lives of women?

What changes have you noticed in the lives of women?

Current Ministry Opportunities – evaluate effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses

- Discipleship groups
- Fall retreat
- Mission involvement
- Spring conference
- Additional specific ministry areas/events

What were the most successful events/activities? Why?

What key elements or concepts can be taken from those events and applied to future events?

Are there any new needs or interests of the women we should address?

What ministries do we need to start or stop to more effectively meet those needs?

How can we better address:

- our women reaching unchurched in community?
- involving “fringe” women?
- targeted evangelistic opportunities?

Projection: Ministry & Involvement for New Ministry Year:

What will our team do to continue improving leadership skills? (Bible study, leadership book or study, attend training workshop, etc.)

Discipleship studies for fall and spring semesters:

- List suggested/planned studies, along with facilitators
- When will we offer these studies? What days? Mornings and/or evenings?

What conferences (regional, state, or national) do we want to attend ...

- As a ministry team for training purposes?
- As a women's ministry?

Events:

- What will we do for our ministry year kickoff? Do we continue with our annual event or try a new way to highlight the start of a new ministry year?

- What kind of fall retreat will we have? Theme? Location? Speaker?

- Do we want to offer a Christmas-related event or activity?

- What kind of spring conference will we have? Theme? Location? Speaker?

Mission Opportunities/Involvement:

- What types of activities/opportunities will we offer throughout the year?

- How can we incorporate mission/service opportunities into other events or Bible study groups?

Brainstorm New Ideas – Stretch and think “outside the box”

Calendar the Events

Chapter 12

Toolbox

Ashley Brusenhan

Leadership:

The Advantage, Patrick Lencioni

Living in Your Strengths, Albert Winseman, Donald Clifton, and Curt Liesveld,

Dangerous Calling, Paul David Tripp

Brothers, We Are Not Professionals, John Piper

Masterplan of Evangelism, Robert C. Coleman

Equipping:

Tough Topics, Sam Storms

The Five Silent Years of Corrie Ten Boom, Rosewell Moore

Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire, Jim Cymbala

Systematic Theology, Wayne Grudem

Women of the Word, Jen Wilkin

Shepherding a Child's Heart, Tedd Tripp

Soul Talk, Dr. Larry Crabb

Women Counseling Women, Elyse Fitzpatrick

Multiply, David Platt and Francis Chan

Enriching:

Thou Givest, They Gather, Amy Carmichael

If, Amy Carmichael

Going off the Deep End, Dave Busby

Shepherd's Look at Psalm 23, Philip Keller

Prodigal God, Tim Keller

Victorious Christians You Should Know, Warren Wiersbe

Humility: The Beauty of Holiness, Andrew Murray

Forgotten God, Francis Chan

The Blessed Woman, Debbie Morris

Lies Women Believe, Nancy Leigh Demoss and Dannah Gresh

Online Resources:

Helpful Blogs and Articles:

www.thegospelcoalition.com

www.desiringgod.org

www.jenwilkin.blogspot.com

www.thegospelcoalition.com

www.relevantmagazine.com

(Good gauge of the thought processes of the younger generation and the issues they are weighing. Represents a wide variety of stances, clearly not all we would agree with, but helps with preparation in with walking them through issues they may need to deal with.)

Practical Websites:

www.lifeway.com/ministries

www.reviveourhearts.com

www.biblegateway.com

www.blueletterbible.com

www.breakawayministries.com



sbtexas.com/women

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