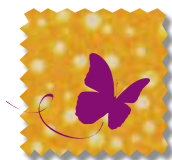


Designing
Your

WOMEN'S MINISTRY



A Step-By-Step
Planning Guide

Designing
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WOMEN'S
MINISTRY



A Step-By-Step
Planning Guide

Loveland, Colorado

Group
Real. Bold. Love.



Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:

Relational—Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential—What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable—The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based—Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

DESIGNING YOUR *Women's Ministry* A Step-by-Step Planning Guide

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IT'S TIME TO Design!

When was the last time you did a bit of redesign in your home? Perhaps you got new cushions for your couch. Repainted a few walls. Installed a different color of carpet. Or maybe you started over and knocked out walls, rebuilt new ones, and changed the layout entirely. Or you might have decided the old house wasn't worth fixing and decided to start completely from the ground up, hiring an architect to create new plans for an entirely new home.

It can be a lot of fun to change things up and refresh our living spaces. But what about your ministry? When was the last time you did a bit of redesign? Have you successfully made changes within the last year? Or have you been doing the exact same women's ministry program for 5, 10, or even 50 years? It's time to refresh and design a women's ministry that meets the needs of today's women!

We're here to help! Through this easy-to-use resource, we'll walk you through the steps to either start an incredible women's ministry in your church or make your current women's ministry better than ever.

We've walked alongside thousands of women's ministry leaders just like you and have learned a lot in the process. We've put that knowledge to work for you here, so there's no guesswork involved. Within these pages you'll find just what you need to set a firm foundation, raise sturdy structures, and design a ministry that's relevant for women—all while drawing them closer to God.



How to Use This Book

This book is created to be used as a workbook. You'll write in the pages, adding your own thoughts, ideas, and plans. We highly recommend you work through this with a team—but if you're alone in ministry at this point, don't let that stop you. As you work through the pages, you'll find help on how to invite others into your ministry leadership team. So if you have a team, **make sure everyone has her own copy of this book** and set aside time on a weekly or monthly basis to work through this step by step. If it's just you, start at the beginning and know you'll be finding help soon!

The book is roughly divided into two sections. The first part of the book focuses on the foundations of your ministry, including mission and leadership. The second part of the book focuses on the implementation of programs and the actual day-to-day with the women in your church and community. You'll start with the foundation—and then move into application of this in your ministry.

Let's get started!



A FIRM Foundation

Any builder will tell you that the key to a strong and long-standing structure is a firm foundation. The Bible repeats this as well, letting us know that a firm, foundational relationship with Jesus is what will keep us strong in the storms of life. It's the same with your ministry. You need a firm foundation. No matter what your ministry looks like in the end, you want to start with a strong foundation. What does that look like? There are several components we'll look at here to give you guidance on how to work through this foundation process.

Prayer

It sounds so basic, but prayer is essential. And invite others to pray with you. Partner with a group of women who already meet regularly for prayer or invite several women to pray regularly—alone or together—during a designated day and time. Invite women who are passionate about connecting with God through prayer to walk beside you.

“They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.”

—Luke 6:48, NIV



What is my specific prayer for women in our church? our community?

“When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

“Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.”

—Ephesians 3:14-20

What is my prayer for women’s ministry?



Whom can I invite to pray with me?



After you’ve invited others to pray with and for you, put a star by those names. And as you see God answering prayers, be sure to return to this page and make notes about those answers and God’s direction. You want to be able to celebrate God’s hand at work in your ministry!



Support of Leadership

The more your church leaders understand the importance of women's ministry and hear your excitement, the more they'll be willing to support you and your team. To help get you started, consider these leaders as a starting point for sharing your desire to start or redesign your women's ministry:

- Senior pastor
- Any pastor or leader who influences small groups or outreach
- Other pastoral staff
- Administrative assistants
- Wives of any male church leaders
- Elders

Include those whose support is critical for moving forward in your church, but also consider the informal leaders whom others consistently listen to and follow. In some churches you'll need to meet with leaders in a formal way, but in most cases, you can share through casual conversations. Make it a priority to speak with people face to face; your excitement and commitment will show!







Here is a list of people I want to talk to about my passion for women's ministry:

Mission

You also need a foundation in the form of a mission statement. A mission statement articulates what your ministry is about—or what it accomplishes. It's used to help guide decisions about priorities, activities, and responsibilities, and it will help you get others on board with your ministry. If you don't have a mission statement, your women's ministry feels meaningless to others—you can't cast the vision. *You* might get it...but others don't. Having a mission statement will help you as you talk to leaders, it will help you as you move toward recruiting a team, and it will help you decide what to do—and not do—as a ministry.

You can create this statement yourself, but doing it with a few others will likely lead you to the strongest possible mission statement. If you're working through this book solo, you might want to put off creating a mission statement until you've invited one or two others to join you in leading the women's ministry of your church. You can move to the next section of the book, and then come back to the mission as one of the first things you do with those women who are joining you in leadership.

A few things to keep in mind:

-  A mission statement needs to be clear to everyone, not just you. If you use lingo or acronyms or Greek words or long words, it will be muddled and hard to explain.
-  Keep it short. You want to be able to say it over and over, and you want others to learn it and say it over and over. So make it memorable!
-  The Bible can provide good direction! Reflect on the verses we've provided in this section—or others you know—and consider using word or concepts from these.
-  Look at the mission statement of your church. You do want to be in alignment with the senior leadership of the church, so see if you can tweak the overarching statement or pull a few key words from it so you're tracking with the rest of the church.



Effective

Mission Statements Are...

- **SIMPLE.** Identify key words important to ministering to your women. Outreach. Care. Growth. Relationships. Community. What are the core values of your church? Prioritize. Can some areas be combined? You can't do it all. Do what you can well.
- **SPECIFIC.** God isn't calling you to the same ministry as the church down the street or on the Internet. Listen to the specific guidance he's giving you. Be obedient and stick to his plan. He knows what he's doing.
- **SHORT.** One phrase or sentence should be sufficient. Women are verbal, and we often want to fit as much as possible. If you feel your mission statement is "stuffed," your ministry to women—and your own schedule—will likely be stuffed. Busy isn't the goal. Effectiveness in ministry is.



“Jesus replied, ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

—Matthew 22:37-39

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.”

—Matthew 28:19-20

“Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”

—Philippians 4:8

Here are a few mission statements you can consider, along with some comments on what these accomplish. You might want to say “That’s it!” and use one of these, or you might want to grapple together with others to determine what’s best for your church and ministry. These will at least serve as ideas and a starting point.

We befriend women and give them a place to belong so they’ll come to believe in Jesus and become more like him.

👍 This statement speaks toward outreach (befriend), community (belong), faith (believe), and growth (become).

Connecting women to Jesus and one another.

👍 A statement like this puts the focus on Jesus and relationships with other women.

We help women build friendships, encourage women in spiritual growth, and reach out to women in our community with the love of Jesus.


👍 This shows the desire for fellowship, growing relationships with God, and outreach.

To connect women with God, connect women with others, and connect others with God.

👍 Here we see connection as a priority in the areas of faith, fellowship, and in outreach.



To help women experience Christ, grow strong in Christ, and take the Christ-experience to their world.

 This statement speaks to a relationship with God—and then taking that to others outside of the church.



Here are a few words we like and want to keep in mind for our mission:



Here are Bible verses that have words or ideas we want to incorporate:



Here are a few possible statements we are thinking about:



This is it! Here is what we have chosen as our mission statement:

We'll be using this statement more in the coming sections, so be sure you write it down. You're going to be using this often!



WHAT SHOULD WE LEAVE OUT?

We've been focusing on what to include in a good foundation...but are there things to leave out? Yes! Leave *competition* and *comparison* behind. Avoid looking at other ministries in your church or other women's ministries at other churches and thinking, "We can be better than them!" Or we might lose hope thinking, "We'll never have as much money (or creativity or staffing or whatever) as they have! We're doomed to fail!"

God wants us to be *for* each other—not *against* each other. We all have the goal of helping women grow closer to God and each other, so let's find ways to partner instead of trying to "one-up" other ministries or give up because we have something different to offer.



Name

We put this last because it's optional. There are a lot of great ministries that just use the name of their church (such as Women's Ministry at First Church or Women of Sunnyside Church or whatever your church's name is). But many women like having a fun name to call their ministry.

Naming is a challenge. Some women like soft and warm names like "Heart to Heart." Others like zippy names like "Sassy Soul Sisters" or "Lemondrop Ladies." Still others like names that reflect Bible or faith interests, such as "Daughters of Destiny" or "Titus 2." So it can be a challenge to come to a consensus.

You do need to capture the character of your ministry—so if you tend toward the soft and warm, it's okay to use a name that reflects that, while if you're an energetic and invigorating group, you'd want to capture that energy instead.

What we advise *against* is choosing a name that alienates women because it's difficult to pronounce (such as a Greek word), or needs an explanation, or requires you're already a Christian to understand it. For example, we wouldn't recommend a name like WIFE (Women In Fellowship and Evangelism) because it implies it's only for married women—thus leaving out a lot of women, and it needs an explanation to know what it is. Or a name like "Fragrant Offerings" is not going to be meaningful to anyone who hasn't read a decent amount of the Bible. If your goal is outreach, no one from the neighborhood will have any idea what you're about with a name like this.

Keep these things in mind as you name your group. It can be fun to have a name, but be sure it's a name that works *for* you instead of *against* you.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- If you use an acrostic, be sure you (and everyone else) can remember what it stands for.
- Uncommon words from the Bible (like Agape Girls or Koinonia Club) might have an awesome meaning...but if they're hard to say or spell or the average woman who goes to your church won't have any idea what that word means, it will be a turnoff and might actually discourage women from coming.
- Words that are trendy may go out of style within a year. Will the name be relevant in two years?
- Avoid words that are associated only with a certain age group or demographic. You want your ministry to be inclusive of all women—not just those over 50 or only those who are married, and so on.
- Invite several women from different age groups to share their ideas before you finalize anything.



Ideas we have for names:



A practical planning guide that's perfect for every stage of your ministry.

Is your women's ministry in need of refreshment? Perhaps a remodel? Or even a complete redesign? Or maybe you're just getting started. No matter where you are in ministry, this resource will move you toward success. This workbook will guide you step by step through best practices in shaping a ministry that draws women closer to God and each other.

- ✧ Create a Bible-based mission statement—and effectively use it to shape your ministry.
- ✧ Lighten your load as you invite others into leadership. (Personality assessments to help you work as a strong team are included.)
- ✧ See your ministry grow as you discover how to promote your ministry to your church and community.
- ✧ Reach and connect women of all ages and life stages.

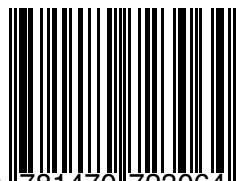


Hi, I'm Amy! Executive editor for Women's Ministry at Group. You can use this book by yourself—but for best results, I recommend you get a copy for each person on your leadership team and walk through it together!

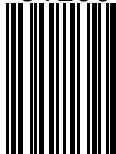


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