

Women's Ministry

Level 1: Laying the Foundation for Women's Ministry

Women's ministry exists to fulfill the purpose of the local church, which is the carrying out of the Great Commission. The fuel for effective women's ministry is the Great Commandment. *Love God...Love Others*. A thriving women's ministry leads to women who are loved, reached, encouraged, engaged, and empowered.

1. A thriving women's ministry begins with a strong biblical foundation.

The leader must understand the foundational elements and be able to create a ministry plan based on all of them. Finding a way to balance the foundational elements equally is essential to ministry success. The foundational elements include:

- **Worship:** Tuning hearts and minds to God
- **Grow:** Studying and applying God's Word to life
- **Connect:** Gathering with women in meaningful ways
- **Serve:** Using everyday opportunities to demonstrate the love of Jesus
- **Share:** Telling others about Jesus

2. A thriving women's ministry is undergirded by prayer.

Ask the Lord to guide you by providing:

- Clear direction.
- Spiritual and relational hunger among the women in your church and community.
- Important details like a purpose statement, a name, an organizational structure, and a staff member to whom you will relate.
- A key leader and a leadership team.
- Meaningful ways for the women's ministry to come under the overall purpose and direction of the pastor and the church.
- (NOTE: Remember that prayer is an important part of the ongoing process of a thriving women's ministry, not just for making initial plans and organizing.)

3. A thriving women's ministry develops over time and is connected to the overall purpose of the church.

Networking within the church and with leaders in your area positions the ministry for success.

- A. Talk to your pastor. Ask him for his input on how women's ministry can play a vital role in your church with questions such as:
 - "How can women's ministry help the mission and the vision of the church move forward?"
 - "What are some things that you would like to see the women in the church do to help build unity among our body of believers?"

- “What are some ways that women’s ministry can help love and serve people beyond the four walls of our church?”

If you do not have the blessing of your pastor, do not start a women’s ministry. Instead, continue to pray, seek God’s direction and respectfully continue the conversations until everyone is in agreement.

- B. Talk to key women in your church. Identify at least one key leader per age group. Ask them for their input on the need for a women’s ministry. Ask them,
- “What do you see God doing in the area of women’s ministry?”
 - “Have you been involved in women’s ministry in the past? If so, what are some success stories?”
 - “How can women’s ministry be an effective tool in our church and community?” (Think of this time as a brainstorm session. Begin to dream and ask God to show you His plan during the process.)
 - “Are you willing and excited about helping in the development process?”

Capture the names of anyone who is willing to serve and excited about women’s ministry. Be sure and talk to women of varying age ranges and life stages during this step. You want every age and life stage represented in this process.

- C. Talk to other women’s ministry leaders in your community and association. Find out what is going on in the area of women’s ministry. Ask them,
- “What is working in the area of women’s ministry in our state and association?”
 - “Are there women’s ministry pitfalls to avoid?”
 - “How can we work together?”

Be proactive about developing relationships with other women’s ministry leaders. Ask them if they would like to network with you in order to reach the community for Jesus. Capture the names of the women who are willing to work with you.

- D. Connect with Andrea Lennon at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Andrea can provide training resources as well as opportunities for leadership development and networking. Each year the Arkansas Baptist State Convention hosts three events for the women of Arkansas:
- Women’s Ministry Roundtables: Held in January across Arkansas.
 - Inspire Women’s Conference: Held in March in Central Arkansas.
 - Women’s Leadership University: Held in September in Central Arkansas.

For more information, visit www.absc.org/women. You can email Andrea at alennon@absc.org.

Level 2: Starting a Women's Ministry

Women's ministry encourages women to grow in their love relationship with Jesus. It can take on different forms in the church. Women's ministry can be as simple as a Bible study group or as complex as a fully developed ministry program. It can develop at a steady pace and change over time in order to meet the evolving needs of women as well as the direction of the church. Women's ministry offers an avenue for women to worship, grow, connect, serve, and share—together! Below are keys steps to starting a thriving women's ministry.

Step 1: Select a Leader and Leadership Team.

- The women's ministry leader may have expressed a sense of calling or may be recruited based on observable gifts and passions. The leader needs to:
 - Have a passion for Jesus.
 - Be organized.
 - Be able to cast vision.
 - Lead a core group of fellow leaders in implementing the vision.
 - Be trusted by the women in the church.
- Once the leader is selected you can begin to develop the leadership team. Developing a women's ministry team is an exciting step in the formation process. During this step, you will see God work in a mighty way to bring the right leaders to serve. The team should be made up of gifted and called women who love Jesus and have a heart for serving other women. The team needs to have a variety of age ranges represented as well as different spiritual giftings.
- The women's ministry leadership team may include some of these roles, all of these roles, or other roles, as needed to reach the women in your church and community.
 - **Worship/Prayer Leader:**
 - Passionate about spiritual leadership
 - A prayer warrior for the ministry
 - Understands the value of personal and corporate worship and will help plan events so that worship (connecting to God through prayer and praise) is always included
 - **Grow/Bible Study Leader:**
 - Passionate about God's Word
 - Plans Bible studies that will help the women of the church grow in their knowledge and application of God's Word to their daily lives
 - **Connect/Event Leader:**
 - Passionate about fellowship and connecting women with each other in meaningful ways
 - Plans large group, small group, and one on one opportunities for the women in the church to meet together in authentic ways so that they can share life

- **Serve/Ministry Project Leader:**
 - Passionate about ministry projects that take place outside the walls of the church
 - Has a heart for people who do not know Jesus and do not have their basic physical needs met
 - Works hard to connect the ministry projects to the gospel so that physical and spiritual needs are met
- **Share/Evangelism Leader:**
 - Passionate about telling others about Jesus
 - Finds creative ways to encourage the women in the church to live “On Mission” for Jesus
 - An advocate for mission work that is happening at home and around the world
- **Promo/Publicity Leader:**
 - Passionate about communication and gifted in the area of informing women about events and opportunities that are available through women’s ministry
 - Able to navigate the world of social media
- **Event Decorator:**
 - Passionate about making everything look good
 - Able to come up with a plan that follows the budget
 - Gifted in creativity, planning, budgeting, and decorating
- Job Descriptions: Each role should have a defined job description that clearly communicates the tasks that need to be completed for ministry success. You can use the brief descriptions above and add additional details to make the description suitable for your needs.

Step 2: Cast a Vision for Women’s Ministry among the Women in Your Church.

- Begin to spread the news: “Women’s Ministry is coming to our church!”
- Share Women’s Ministry “victories” from other churches or past experiences. Start a Facebook page or an email distribution list for the women in your church. Think of the best ways to create a “community” so your women can begin to gather and live life together. If technology is not your thing, plan a casual meeting with the women in your church to talk about what is going on in your heart regarding women’s ministry. Keep things simple and relational.
- Be open to new ideas as you dream about the possibilities of reaching women both inside your church and living in your community.
- Capture the name of anyone who has a passion for serving in women’s ministry. Watch for ways that God is working among the women in your church. You may discover additional leadership team members via this vision casting step.

Step 3: Conduct a Survey.

- Compile a survey for the women in your church that will help you to identify needs so that you can prayerfully and purposefully plan.
- There are many benefits to a survey:
 - Provides ownership among the women in your church.
 - Identifies the greatest need(s).
 - Helps to gauge interest.
 - Builds excitement about the ministry.
- Promote the survey church-wide and invite every woman to participate.
- Compile the survey results and use them in your planning process. Utilizing the results in your planning process will help to build trust and ownership among the women because it demonstrates that all the women in the church will play a vital role in the direction of the women's ministry.

Step 4: Create a Purpose Statement.

- A purpose statement tells the women in your church what the ministry is about. The purpose statement should be easy to remember and easily recited. In a sense, the purpose statement is a promise to your women.
- The purpose statement can connect to the church's overall purpose statement. Some women's ministries take the church's purpose statement and adopt it for their ministry. Other women's ministries take the heart of the church's purpose statement into consideration and then develop a unique statement for themselves.
- Keep the purpose statement short, simple, to the point, and relational. (Make sure you can remember it and state it when asked!)
- When developing the purpose statement, ask the questions, "Who are we and what are we about?"
- All activities and plans should play a role in accomplishing the purpose statement.

Step 5: Prepare and Plan.

- Create a yearly calendar of events and ministry opportunities for the women in your church. Planning a yearly calendar will help you to be balanced in your ministry approach. This is especially true if you evaluate your year and ask the question, "Are we helping our women to worship, grow, connect, serve, and share with our yearly schedule of events?" Preparing and planning will help the ministry to avoid focusing on one aspect of ministry to the exclusion of others. Be sure to plan different types of opportunities for your women.
- Create a yearly budget for your ministry. Ministry requires money and you will need funds to minister to the women in your church and community. A sample conference/retreat budget is provided in Appendix A.

- As you plan, think about the different life stages: single, young moms, professionals, empty nesters, senior adults, etc. In the beginning, you may want to plan opportunities that will meet the needs of women no matter their age or life stage. Once the ministry is a little more developed, you can begin to specialize by focusing on the unique needs in the different age groups and life stages.

Step 6: Promote and Publicize.

- Promote your women's ministry in a variety of ways. Strive to cast vision, communicate opportunities, and enlist women to help you in the development process. Use the following communication outlets to let the women know about the things taking place via women's ministry:
 - Church newsletter and bulletin
 - Sunday morning announcements
 - Personal invitations through Sunday School and Bible studies
 - Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, blog, and church website
 - Mailings including postcard and email
 - Bulletin boards

Step 7: Strategically Launch with an Event.

- Plan a kick-off event and invite the women from your church and community. This event will introduce the women to the ministry and set the tone for how women's ministry will bless and enrich the lives of the women. A few examples include a luncheon, weekend retreat, one-day conference, or drop-in event.
- At the event, allow for "getting to know you time" as well as time to share about the ministry. Consider having ministry booths that showcase opportunities for the year. You can print off and give the women the yearly calendar of events. This will help the women know that the women's ministry is serious about having an ongoing presence at the church. You may want to unveil the name of your ministry as well as the purpose statement. This is a fun time that builds excitement among your women. Be sure to have sign-up sheets so that you can capture the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses for the women who attend.
- Be intentional and plan a "next step" that you can promote at the launch event. For example, while hosting a retreat or conference, promo the next event, Bible study, or mission project. Your goal at the kick-off event is to build momentum so that the ministry can continue to grow and move forward. The kick-off event needs to "kick-off" opportunities for your women to worship, grow, connect, serve, and share—together!

Step 8: Evaluate.

- Evaluation should be an on-going process in your women's ministry planning. Evaluating each event provides direction for future planning because the women's ministry team is able to identify

areas of success and areas for improvement. Evaluation helps your women's ministry stay relevant.

- Be willing to try new things and know that it is okay to fail. Just like in life, some things work and some things do not. When you offer an event or ministry opportunity and the women in your church do not respond to it, keep moving forward. Learn a lesson or two and start planning the next opportunity for your women.
- Invite the women to have a voice in the evaluation process. Ask for their feedback when it is appropriate and when you are at a place in your ministry development process where feedback is helpful in the planning process.



Level 3: Taking Your Women's Ministry to the Next Level

Women's ministry is one of the most effective ways to reach women with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are many benefits to a fully developed women's ministry program that is thriving in your church. Women's ministry will help:

- Your church grow numerically and spiritually.
- Women feel accepted when they join your church, especially if they are single, divorced, or have a spouse who will not attend church.
- Open the door to meaningful relationships.
- Encourage women to discover, develop, and use their spiritual gifts.
- Provide vision and networking for both church and community ministries.
- Encourage spiritually older women to mentor younger women.
- Follow Jesus' example of ministry to and with women.
- Help women fight spiritual battles.
- Affect families as women's lives are drawn closer to Christ.

When your women's ministry is fully developed, the following outcomes will happen:

- **Salvation:** Women are coming to faith in Christ.
- **Spiritual Growth:** Women are growing in their love relationship with Christ.
- **Inspired:** Women are embracing their God-given roles in the home, church, and community.
- **Trained and Empowered:** Women are serving in the local church as well as leading others to faith in Christ—at home and around the world.

One way to ensure that your women's ministry is balanced and fully developed is by providing opportunities for women to worship, grow, connect, serve, and share—together.

Worship: Tuning Hearts and Minds to God

- The Bible says that we are to, "Exalt the Lord our God; worship at His footstool! Holy is He." Psalm 99:5 (ESV)
- Genuine worship paves the way for a change in focus, values, perspectives, priorities, and outlooks. When this occurs, an eternal view of God is embraced, rather than a temporary view of man. (Isaiah 6)
- A women's ministry can provide meaningful times of praise and prayer during women's events and Bible studies. Taking ten to fifteen minutes and having a time of prayer or praise so that women can sing songs to the Lord will help the women slow down and remember that God loves them and has a plan for their lives.

- The women in your church are most likely overwhelmed with life. They may be busy, overly committed, or simply “tired” of playing church. As a result, the women do not need another program or project to take up their time. They need a move of God’s Spirit in and through their lives. Worship provides an avenue where women can connect with God so that He can refresh their hearts and minds.
- Encouraging women to incorporate prayer and praise in their daily routine teaches them the value of being still and knowing that God is God. (Psalm 46:10)

Grow: Studying and Applying God’s Word to Life

- Spiritual growth will not occur in a woman’s life without a consistent intake of the Bible. “All Scripture is breathed out by God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” 1 Timothy 3:16 (ESV)
- The study of God’s Word provides the basis of a thriving women’s ministry. Women need to know the Bible. Women need to ask the Holy Spirit to apply the teachings of the Bible to their daily lives.
- The women’s ministry needs to develop a plan that offers studies at all spiritual levels from milk (introductory) studies to meat (deeper) studies. Keep the concept of sanctification in mind as you prayerfully plan your studies. You want to meet women where they are and challenge them to grow. You can challenge your women to grow by offering studies that address varying needs in a woman’s life and by utilizing studies written by different authors.
- Offer studies of varying lengths and at different times. Use a survey to find the best times to meet. Childcare will be necessary.
- Work within the overall Bible study strategy of the church. Work with your pastor or minister of education to know what is going on church-wide in the area of Bible studies and discipleship.

Connect: Women Gathering with Women in Meaningful Ways

- The early church in the book of Acts provides a great example of connecting with each other in meaningful ways. “And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” Acts 2:46-47 (ESV)
- Women are relational and need to experience the love and support that comes from other women. When they do, women are loved, challenged, accepted, valued, and supported.
- Meaningful connections between women need to happen with women in their age group as well as women in differing age groups.
- In your women’s ministry, strive to develop an atmosphere where everyone has a place to belong. Take steps to avoid the development of cliques and power groups. You can do this by offering new opportunities that invite different women to get

involved. You have to keep an eye on this pitfall or your women's ministry will suffer. Ask your key leaders to help you in the process by finding new women, befriending them, and helping them get connected.

- Women need to gather in at least three different "connect" settings within the church:
 - Large Group Setting: This is a time when all the women in your church gather together. Some ideas for large group meetings include paint parties, dessert fellowships, retreats, conferences, and banquets. These connect opportunities offer meaningful times where all the women in your church can gather for a time of fun so that they can develop relationships, be encouraged, and be equipped in their walk with God.
 - Small Group Setting: This is a time when age graded or life stage groups gather for fellowships or small group Bible studies. This smaller connect setting provides a time for deeper, more meaningful relationships to develop. Spiritual conversations can center on relevant issues like marriage, parenting, empty nest, singles, working moms, etc.
 - One-on-One Setting: Some of the most meaningful connections in your church between women will happen in mentor relationships. This occurs when an older woman and a younger woman meet together for the purpose of prayer support, accountability, and Bible study.

Serve: Using Everyday Opportunities to Demonstrate the Love of Jesus

- "...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:28 (ESV) Jesus served and we should serve, too. Service projects should be done in love and with a focus on Jesus. This type of service opens doors for the gospel to be shared.
- Before you pick a project, assess the needs in your community. Look for a project that will be meaningful to the women in your church as well as build a bridge for sharing the gospel or inviting unchurched people to your church. It is important to be Spirit led in this process so that your ministry project opens doors for the good news of Jesus.
- Easy steps that will help you complete a ministry project include:
 1. Select a service project.
 2. Recruit key leaders to help.
 3. Cast a vision by sharing the need with the women in your church. (Promote, Promote, Promote!)
 4. Provide training if needed.
 5. Complete the service project together.
 6. Celebrate the victory. Be sure and let the women know how the Lord worked and moved during the project. Celebrating the victory will build momentum for the next project that your women will complete together.

Share: Telling Others about Jesus

- God places people in your life for the purpose of sharing His good news. Women need to be prepared and excited about sharing the good news of Jesus with their family, friends, coworkers, and people that they meet.
- The Bible teaches that we should always be ready to give an answer for the hope that we have in Jesus. In order to do this, we have to keep Jesus front and center in our lives. “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.” 1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)
- Make it your goal to help the women in your church know how to share their faith. Keep it simple and relational. Ask the women to write down their stories focusing on life before they met Jesus, how they met Jesus, and how their life has changed since meeting Jesus. Challenge your women to know their story, own their story, and share their story!
- Teach the women the concept of relational evangelism. God places people in your lives for the purpose of sharing the gospel. You have the chance to meet them at your kids’ sporting events or in your workplace. Recognizing these relationships and cultivating them in the right ways provides an opportunity to share Jesus.
- Teach your women that opportunities to share are right here at home and all over the world.
- Practical “Share” Strategies:
 - At Church:
 - Teach women how to share their faith.
 - Give women opportunities to tell their success “share” stories at women’s ministry events.
 - Pray for the people that your women are investing in through relational evangelism. Be discreet in this process and always honor the people and families who are involved in the evangelism process.
 - In the Community:
 - Look for ways that God is at work in your community and strive to build relationships that provide an opportunity to share the Gospel. Start by focusing on your ministry project. Who have you met through your ministry project that does not know Jesus or does not attend church? Build intentional relationships with the goal of sharing the message of Jesus.
 - Spiritually invest in the people in your community who need to know Jesus and need to see Jesus lived out in you. Find creative ways to share spiritual encouragement with them.
 - All Over the World
 - Promote mission opportunities by spotlighting an upcoming trip, praying for missionaries and specific people groups, and collecting supplies for mission trips.

- Challenge women to give sacrificially to mission work through Cooperative Program giving.
- Invite women to go on a mission trip and see the incredible opportunities to share their faith.



Appendix A: Sample Conference/Retreat Budget

When planning a Conference or Retreat, take into consideration the following expense categories:

- Arrangements:
 - Facility Fees
 - Food
- Program:
 - Honorarium (worship leaders)
 - Honorarium (speaker)
 - Transportation and lodging for guest leaders
- Publicity:
 - Newspaper advertisement
 - Radio advertisement
 - Postcard and postage
 - Printed materials (brochures, posters, and programs)
 - Printing Cost for Handouts
- Decorations:
 - Entrance to the building
 - Stage/Sanctuary
 - Meal/Fellowship area
 - Displays/Bulletin Board
- Childcare:
 - Fees for the workers
 - Food for the kids and workers
- Gifts:
 - Door prizes
 - Gift basket for the platform speaker and worship leader
 - Take home gift for the participants (optional)
 - Gift bags for participants that can include tissues, lotion, pen, handouts, gum, novelty items

Income for an event can come from ticket sales, donated or raised funds, and your women's ministry budget. Be sure and take into account the program leaders and volunteers who will not be asked to pay to attend the event.