



# Changing the Culture of Ministry to Women in the Church

A PARADIGM SHIFT FOR ALL MINISTRY LEADERS



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# CHANGING THE CULTURE OF MINISTRY TO WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

## PREFACE

### WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Women's ministry in the church has significant impact on the spiritual growth of women and has provided many women with a sense of belonging, a place to be centred on the Word, and a place to share in the lives of others and as such, plays a vital role in the discipleship and evangelism of the church.

There are many reasons why women attend church and engage in a women's ministry. Some attend faithfully, serve or lead within a women's ministry, but many women struggle to attend women's events and some struggle to even attend church regularly. Many factors have influenced the current condition and health of women's ministry within the church. Family priorities and dynamics, financial pressures, the influence of technology and social media, the prevalence of emotional and mental health and personal experience with women's ministry events all have a unique influence on the engagement of women in the church specifically within a women's ministry.

Whether raised in the church or new to the church, most women have experienced or observed women's ministry at some level. Many churches successfully run a women's small group Bible study, host an annual event or a structured prayer initiative. However, when these events define a women's ministry, it can be limiting to many women since various ministry initiatives seem to attract a narrow age demographic with very little reach into the 25-50 age groups. Many women long to be involved in a deeper level of community, to see their faith develop and grow, but for various reasons, significant age demographics are poorly represented at regularly held women's initiatives, leaving gaps in opportunity for further reach.

While the needs, preferences and priorities of women are as equally important as they are diverse, one thing remains constant—the discipleship of a woman's life is something to be valued. Hence, the



investment from the church in women's discipleship matters and needs to be intentional within women's ministry.

How then does the evangelical church best reach women in an effort to enable them to become fully devoted disciples of Christ? And, how does the church best structure a women's ministry to reach all age demographics of women beyond a traditional event-oriented approach?

## A WAY FORWARD

These questions present two challenges within a women's ministry—one theological and the other practical—but both necessary in effort to strengthen and equip women to be disciples of Christ and let Christ build His church.

Women face struggles that trace back to Genesis 3 where the intended complimentary design of the relationship between men and women in marriage was corrupted by sin. By extension, this distortion has impacted the relationship between men and women in the church. Through Christ, the recovery of these relationships has been redeemed for marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33) and for the church. Evidence shows us in Titus 2:3-5 that Paul instructs Titus to create order for the church, to teach and lead older woman in sound doctrine and for older women to teach younger women. As such, ministry to women can function in a redeemed complimentary form to the unique needs of women within the church. Furthermore, women who struggle to fully understand Christ's intent for church structure need to be nurtured and taught with sound doctrine to better understand God's design and intent for the church. However counter-cultural this may feel today, ministry to women in the church *must* recognize that the responsibility of leadership has been given to men in marriage and in the church, understand the challenges as a result of sin and encourage a complementarian relationship and structure in order for leadership to have a glorifying result.

The focus of this resource attempts to address both the priority and need for a greater emphasis of the discipleship of women within a women's ministry and the issue of reaching women beyond traditional methods that tend to overlook large groups of women within the changing environment of the church within the governance of Scripture and Christ's purpose for the church.



First, this resource will introduce and encourage a paradigm shift in women's ministry that reincorporates the women's ministry into the wider ministry of the church. Second, it will raise five concerns often present in women's ministries that contribute to both problems of a theological and practical nature. Third, this resource will propose solutions to create a vibrant and healthy ministry to women in the local church.

### **WHO SHOULD READ THIS RESOURCE?**

The pastor(s) as well as the women's ministry leader can be encouraged to read this resource in an effort to improve the spiritual health of women in the church and develop a ministry mindset more consistent with the changing culture and needs of women. As pastoral leadership becomes aware of ministry methods and concerns addressed in this resource, prayer and communication with a women's ministry leader is encouraged. As women become aware of these concerns, some can be addressed by women within the leadership of women's ministry. However, as they pursue intentional ministry efforts, this resource is designed for women in leadership to consider the Biblical structure of church leadership and seek guidance from pastors or elders and deacons with ministry oversight for all ministry to women initiatives.



## PARADIGM SHIFT: FROM WOMEN'S MINISTRY TO MINISTRY TO WOMEN

To change the culture of women's ministry in the church, what's needed is a shift in thinking. Consider the difference between *Women's Ministry* and *Ministry to Women*. The first, clearly possessive in its title, has proven effective in some ways but often functions independently within the church and limits itself to a smaller reach, with significant age demographics neglected. Ministry to Women, although a simple mindset change, creates opportunity for a larger reach to the discipleship of women in the church. It encourages women's ministry to fall under the overall leadership structure and increases communication with leadership. This shift in thinking requires a shift in ministry mindset and ministry lingo, best initiated from a pastoral leadership level. When understood, leadership can invite the women's ministry leader and team to engage in this ministry perspective and begin to develop opportunities that communicate this effectively. This ministry model does not remove the need for structured study of the Word, prayer, or meeting together as women, but enhances its reach to consider ways of engaging women outside of these established initiatives within the church. See appendix 1 "Ministry to Women Structural Proposal" for further understanding of how to propose change within a women's ministry.

This ministry mindset aligns itself better with the overall ministry model of the church. A women's ministry vision statement that is congruent and compliments the church's vision statement can reach more women who attend church, resulting in women feeling part of and included in the women's ministry of the church, regardless of their ability to attend an event.

When leadership looks at any woman who attends the church, a question that should be considered is, how can the *church* enable her to become a fully devoted disciple of Christ, rather than how can a *women's ministry* do this alone? A women's ministry would miss the opportunity to invest in her spiritual growth if she is unable to attend a structured women's event and as such, would not be considered a part of women's ministry within the church.





There are many ways that the discipleship of women can be evident in the church outside of the arm of a women's ministry model. For example, many women meet regularly within church-wide discipleship groups, in teams that serve together, prayer collectives, support groups, one-on-one personal connections, young-adult women connections and in many other places. While it is not the responsibility of the women's ministry leader to reach all these groups directly, a mindset and intention to identify and value them as women is vital to the discipleship of all women. As they consider ways to uniquely connect with them and meet their needs, women's ministry initiatives can become more aware and inclusive of these groups and work towards that end.

When leadership recognizes that ministry to women is happening within these groups, opportunities to encourage, include, equip and resource them can develop more easily. This ministry mindset will strengthen the cohesiveness of women in the church and increase growth and discipleship among women. Likewise, women who are involved in these smaller connections will begin to value their weekly connections with other women, possibly with greater intention as they value their influence in the lives of others. We exist for the transformation of others in order "to present everyone mature in Christ" (Colossians 1:28). When pastoral leadership and women's ministry work together to invoke this shift in thinking, a larger reach can be identified and communication between pastoral leadership and the women's ministry leader will prove more unified and advance more efficiently in complimentary form.





## 5 AREAS OF CONCERN THAT AFFECT THE DISCIPLESHIP OF WOMEN WITHIN THE CHURCH

### CONCERN #1 | AUTONOMY

One of the greatest concerns in the leadership structure of the church is an autonomous women's ministry. Many women are willing to serve and be a part of ministry to women, but few understand *why* they are limited to certain positions and opportunity in the church and *why* it feels different than the workplace. Women today need to discover God's good design for male headship so that even the strong, competent women leader can realize the value and blessing of humbly following the direction of pastoral leadership. (1 Timothy 2-3; Titus 1-2). Whether pastoral leadership has experienced a lack of willingness from women in this area or women have experienced a lack of pastoral leadership is not the focus. However, an autonomous women's ministry within a church proves concerning to the health and discipleship of women in the church.

A strong independent women's ministry that flows out of its own vision or structure can conflict with the overall direction, structure or priorities of the church. Likewise, a women's ministry that is void of pastoral oversight can develop certain liberties that are not consistent with church mission or vision or even doctrine. Either scenario can result in challenges and frustrations within ministry efforts. This tension can limit ministry initiatives and affect the spiritual growth of women and could eventually be harmful to the overall health of the church.

This shift in mindset can be effective if, for example, the vision of the church is to encourage church members to engage in church-wide small groups. It would be necessary for the women's Bible studies to align with this vision. Women's leadership would need to encourage women to support this thinking and recognize that women's Bible studies would be in addition to church-wide small group attendance. If a choice needed to be made, women's ministry would encourage the priorities of the church as a whole. A ministry to women model would then prioritize discipleship and work to encourage, resource or equip the women who attend church-wide small groups. This shift in



ministry mindset would take time and would require communication and creative thinking from both pastoral and women's leadership to develop ways to reach women where ministry to women is happening.

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#### **PASTORAL PRIORITIES TO CONSIDER:**

- ESTABLISHING A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WOMEN'S MINISTRY LEADER
- MAINTAINING OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION
- WORKING TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT MINISTRY TO WOMEN FLOWS DIRECTLY OUT OF THE MISSION AND VISION OF THE CHURCH

Women need to be encouraged to look to leadership early so that ministry efforts can be generated at a ground-level.

- ENCOURAGING THE WOMEN'S MINISTRY LEADER TO DEVELOP A TEAM MENTALITY
- PRAYING FOR AND WITH THE WOMEN'S MINISTRY LEADER

Help a women's ministry leader consider her priority to God, family and her unique responsibilities to women's ministry. Women in the front-lines of ministry are often driven women who need help prioritizing what matters.

- STANDING BEHIND THE WOMEN'S MINISTRY LEADER WHEN SHE FACES CHALLENGES OR OPPOSITION
- CONSIDERING A PRESENCE WITHIN SOME WOMEN'S INITIATIVES
- ENCOURAGING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP TO CONTINUALLY ENGAGE IN A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES

Consider ways to teach essential doctrines to women in leadership.



## A WOMEN'S MINISTRY LEADER'S PRIORITIES TO CONSIDER:

- AFFIRMING AND SUPPORTING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH, PRIVATELY AND PUBLICALLY
- MODELLING A MINISTRY OF PRAYER; PRAYING FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH; PRAYING REGULARLY WITH WOMEN'S MINISTRY LEADERS
- ALIGNING THE VISION AND MISSION OF THE WOMEN'S MINISTRY WITH THE VISION AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Seek leadership for this. Learn the vision of the church. Know it. Adapt this vision for women's ministry. Use similar wording. Regularly express to other women how ministry to women at your church effectively aligns and falls under the leadership umbrella of the church.

- SEEKING PASTORAL DIRECTIVE INITIALLY SO THAT MINISTRY EFFORTS CAN FLOW OUT OF A FOUNDATIONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH RATHER THAN SEEK APPROVAL OF OWN INITIATIVES THAT MAY NOT FIT WITH THE LEADERSHIP DIRECTION OF THE CHURCH
- LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING THE TEACHING POSITION OF THE CHURCH ON ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES
- CONSIDERING OPPORTUNITIES TO SEE PASTORAL LEADERSHIP DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN WOMEN'S INITIATIVES
- LOOKING TO BE LED

Ask yourself: Are you willing to be led? Are you communicating to leadership that you are willing to be led? How can you effectively improve in this area? Consider your 'teachability' index. How open are you to direction? What's your willingness to learn? What's your willingness to change?

- SEEING THE BENEFITS OF REGULAR COMMUNICATION

Always consider the larger responsibilities that pastoral leadership carries beyond that of women's ministry initiatives.

- Submit a monthly communication report that summarizes your activities. Keep it short, less than a page.



- Communicate to leadership that you value their influence and leadership and that you are looking to be led. This helps pastoral leadership stay apprised of women's ministry activities and to back you up if challenges occur.
  - Be careful not to assume leadership will affirm all your efforts or reply in the same detail you have provided. Your purpose should be to communicate a desire to be led and update leadership with activity details.  
See [www.ministrytowomen.com](http://www.ministrytowomen.com) for further resources.
  - Discover how regular communication creates value to a woman's ministry leader and helps identify priorities. Doing this regularly may feel task oriented; however, identifying *what* you do helps clarify *why* you do it. You will clearly grasp what may be lacking from your women's ministry efforts.
  - Watch for opportunity for leadership to move you in a direction you may not have considered.
- **LEARNING WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT WOMEN'S ROLES IN THE CHURCH**

The Bible speaks clearly to the role of women in the church (1 Timothy 2-3; Titus 1-2). Do you know why? How do you communicate these truths in your day-to-day ministry with others? Ask your leadership for direction and understanding. Seek resources from your leadership.



## CONCERN #2 | BIBLICAL ILLITERACY LEADING TO SKEWED THINKING

Weak theology and bad hermeneutics stem from an ever-present problem of Biblical illiteracy within the evangelical church. Too many women are satisfied with an opinion or authority from outside sources rather than relying on the truths of God's Word as their best resource. <sup>1</sup>

Women long to be satisfied by God but often look for wisdom and knowledge everywhere but in God's Word. With the ease of publishing a book, writing a blog and the reach that media and technology creates for many female writers and speakers, information is plentiful and readily available simply by the click of button or the swipe of a screen. Women seeking spiritual direction often turn to books that have been written from personal experience and present an authoritative perspective. These books can be filled with emotional thinking, mixed with twisted scripture and weak theology, yet, at the same time sound very spiritual. Vulnerable women become emotionally influenced by such books and their allegiance to an author can blind them to twisted interpretations of scripture and the acceptance of weak theology (2 Timothy 3:1-9). This fuels a problem that results in women lacking spiritual discernment, unaware of the need to think Biblically.

Women need to get back to the basics of reading God's Word, approaching God's Word accurately and praying Biblically. This is crucial to the health and discipleship of women in the church. Although what may tend to be a male dominated environment, women have equally sharp minds and equal need to be encouraged to consider a serious and deeper level of study personally or at a Bible College or Seminary level.

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<sup>1</sup> Wisdom passed down to me from my pastor, Rev. Dr. Rick Baker several years ago, was that if I could do one thing in women's ministry, it would be to see women turn from their dependency of Christian authors to their dependency on God's Word. What a charge! What a challenge! This has significantly influenced me to prioritize the discipleship of women in the church through ministry to women initiatives.



Women are seeking answers. And, if left to the lure of outside sources or the quick solution of referring to the internet alone, they will continue to be swayed by weak theology and skewed portions of scriptures that albeit satisfy the immediate need but confuse and weaken proper understanding of scriptural truths.

The more invested a women's ministry is to the strengthening and equipping of the Biblical discipleship of women—to look to the authority of scripture for all areas of life and godliness—the more women will become spiritually discerning and will Biblically challenge other women to do the same (2 Peter 1:3).

## CONCERNS

Biblical illiteracy that leads to skewed thinking feeds the next three concerns regarding ministry to women in the church.

### CONCERN #3 | DISTORTED IDENTITY

A distorted identity is weakening the spiritual health and discipleship of women within the church and needs to be addressed. Messaging seen in commercials, social media or viral videos influence women to look for things on which to attach themselves in order to bring meaning and identity to their lives. The influence society has confuses a women's identity that is only discovered hidden in Christ (Colossians 3: 1-4). The identity believers have in Christ transcends stage of life, culture, gender, economics or pursuit of self-discovery.

Poor theological understanding and bad hermeneutics have been at play in the understanding of a woman's identity and purpose in the pursuit of self-discovery. Scripture overflows with descriptions of a new life in Christ that helps define our identity and its purpose. For example, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that *we* (believers) are *all* being transformed, by the Holy Spirit, into the *same* image of Christ. It reads, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” The same image is the image we have been grafted in to.



Well-meaning women have attempted to understand their purpose and calling in life by using scriptures like this to claim an identity that is independent of others, used for personal gain or reflective of themselves through self-discovery or personal affirmation to name and claim. They have distorted this identity by personalizing and/or individualizing their identity in Christ. Our identities in Christ are not a self-seeking, self-affirming or a self-declaring means to live a purposeful life. When God reflects His glory in and through our lives, *we* can be used for His purpose, for His glory and for His Kingdom work.

In our attempt to seek further understanding of ourselves and discover our reason for existence we have been encouraged to clarify and claim our individuality, our strengths and weakness, our character, our preferred expressions or default tendencies wrapped up by a label or well-intended classifications possibly at the cost of distorting what God intended for our understanding of who we are in Christ. We exist for the transformation of others with gifts given to us to be given to others. Each member of the body of Christ has God-given weaknesses that are to be met by the God-given strengths of others. Our identity in Christ is for the sake of our unity in Christ as one body—the church.

Our identity in Christ is the same as one another's and can be summarized better with a list of 'we are' in Christ rather than a list of 'I am' statements women are often resourced with. *We* are blessed, chosen, adopted, accepted, redeemed and forgiven (Ephesians 1) and *we* are all being transformed into the *same* image (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is not a competitive, independent self-declaring identity meant to help women feel better about themselves, bring purpose to their days or cause them to be brave or stand alone. A woman's identity is found in Christ for His glory, alone (Ephesians 1:24-27).

Furthermore, too many women are deceived into thinking that their Biblical identity is only useful if it leads to a leadership role, seen as part of a cause greater than themselves or portrayed as part of a social media platform. Imaging, branding and personal platform building does not build the church. Although those areas can be effective in our culture today, a woman must be encouraged to work alongside one another for the purpose of building up the church for evangelism and discipleship, rather than aim to develop personalized,





independent platforms that can compete for effectiveness, create isolation, or reflect a glory that only belongs to God.

The identity craved is the identity we have already been given in Jesus (Ephesians 5)! All women are to be about Jesus' Kingdom work—Christ builds his church (Matthew 16), we are to make disciples (Matthew 28) to present everyone mature in Christ (Colossians 1:28). And, while God can uniquely and creatively use women's lives in different platforms of influence for His purpose, the identity we all share should unite us rather than divide us or confuse us into thinking that it is meant for individual self-discovery or personal gain (Ephesians 4).

#### ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

- Women need to be re-oriented to a Biblical understanding of an identity in Christ. Women will continue to face cultural opposition that encourages a distorted identity. Many are subtly influenced by Christian movements that fuel this concern. (See, Concern #5 Para-Church Organizations.)
- Women need to be led and protected in this area. Biblical identity, the use of spiritual gifts, calling and role of women could become a focus of study (Genesis 3; Titus 2; 1 Timothy 2:12; Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 10:31, 33b, 12; Ephesians 1-3; Jude 1).
- Humility, faithfulness, service, stewardship, servant-mindedness, surrender, submission, brokenness, wisdom, are all characteristics that should define a women's usefulness to God's and should be pursued.
- Women need to become "faithful with a few" (Matthew 25:23). The lesson is often there. God develops a woman's reach for His Glory and His purpose, in His time. In Christ, the time is now. Women need to be reminded of their opportunity and responsibility for kingdom work by considering the lives of whom they've already been entrusted, rather than wait for a larger platform.



## CONCERN #4 | CLAIMING A DIRECT REVELATION FROM GOD

Claiming a personal word or direct revelation from God clearly challenges Biblical doctrines essential to the Christian faith such as, the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Peter 1:3, 19; 2 Timothy 3:16-17); the doctrine of prayer (2 Chronicles 7:13-15; Matthew 6; Hebrews 1:1-2); the doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:17; John 16:8-11; 2 Corinthians 13:8-18) and how the Bible speaks to decision-making and the will of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Ephesians 5:11, 15-17).

An excellent teaching that helps give explanation of how such claims challenge essential doctrines can be heard on the, *Truth in Love Podcast of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselling*. Heath Lambert discusses with Keith Palmer why statements like this can mislead and affect our understanding of God and how we are to communicate with Him. This also identifies a popular women's resource that many women in the evangelical church are reading daily. This resource teaches women to look for personal experiences and seek to listen for a specific word from God in silence.

This is available for download here and excellent for teaching women these concerns:

<https://biblicalcounseling.com/2017/04/til-086-god-speaking-feat-keith-palmer/> It is a must listen!

With full version, available for purchase here:

<https://biblicalcounseling.com/product/mysticism-in-counseling/>.

Expressions such as 'God told me', 'God said to me' or 'I had a word from the Lord' are often overheard among women's Bible study groups or within mentoring or private conversations. The expressions can often be accepted for prayer or become an authority that influences the topic of decision making and the will of God. When women's Bible studies are video driven and encourage group discussion, popular authors and video teachers take a platform of authority and can be heard promoting how they received a 'word from God,' often shared through anecdotal experience and language. This subtle—and not-so-subtle—teaching encourages women to consider and experience the same. Well know authors influence women with step by step approach to seek stillness and listen for



specific word from God beyond the written Word. Women, who are moved to deepen their faith by seeking similar experiences or to expect a specific word from God are left confused, dependent on emotional expectations of prayer that become dependent on a works-based-seeking-faith. Lost to emotion and extra-Biblical endeavours, this leaves little room for discernment or understanding of essential doctrine.

This area of concern becomes a difficult conversation to have with women and is often an unwilling message to receive. This concern involves a deeper level of understanding that requires time to consider and learn. Unfortunately, many women are content to accept their favourite authors as an authority, rather than look to a deeper understanding of scripture for their source of truth (Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Ephesians 3:17-32; Revelation 22:18-19).

Pastoral leadership can encourage women in leadership to consider a better understanding of these Biblical truths, have a greater awareness to this concern, share the teaching position of the church on these matters and equip women with resources that teach specific doctrine that explains and refutes such thinking. Women can also be encouraged to speak authoritatively using scripture to challenge women others who need directing and help in these areas.

The health and discipleship of women in the church requires clarity and sound teaching on these matters because any woman involved in ministry to women will at some point be asked their perspective and Biblical understanding of these essential doctrines.



## CONCERN #5 | PARACHURCH ORGANIZATIONS THAT CONFUSE AND WEAKEN THE CHURCH

Ministry to women in the church should have a solid grasp of the needs of women and look to resource and equip women with solid resources consistent with sound Biblical teaching (Titus 1:5, 2:1). Even though there are numerous parachurch ministries available that come alongside churches to aid in the discipleship and spiritual growth of women in the church, women should be encouraged to look to the local church for discipleship within community and shepherding from pastoral leadership (1 Peter 5:1-5). With the ease of internet promotion and the glamour of graphic design, parachurch organizations can easily reach women who are looking outside the church for something more. New women's movements or organizations that have been resourcing women for some time can err on the lighter side of doctrine in order to reach the masses. By reaching a larger religious demographic, the compromise of sound doctrine generates ecumenism that can have damaging results within the spiritual growth of a woman and her influence on others.

Women can be encouraged to be involved with parachurch ministries but to do so without minimizing priority to the role of church. Within parachurch organizations women should be encouraged to look for evidence of sound Biblical doctrine and ministry staff that are held accountable to an official doctrinal statement that expresses a strong Biblical ecclesiology.

Women who engage in or attend parachurch movements can be influenced by the authority of the organization. This can create confusion and rationalism that affects the spiritual health of women, and therefore, the health of the church. Such confusion can appear in many areas:

- the role of women,
- the use of ordinances outside of the church,
- the opportunity to feel a part of a community often not governed by sound authority or church leadership,
- eclectic teaching and methodology of spiritual disciplines and doctrines that are not congruent with sound Biblical doctrine,
- emotional and subjective experience that stirs up a woman who may return to her church and observe her church to be lacking in the influence of her spiritual growth,



- dissatisfaction of the current condition of their women's ministry efforts,
- involvement in organizations that take away from serving in the local church,
- and, confusion regarding where their spiritual oversight and influence should come from.

These can all have dramatic influence on the spiritual health of women in the church.

Intentional effort and the discipleship of women needs to become a focus in order to help develop spiritual discernment and satisfy women who are seeking a deeper Biblical truth. It is the responsibility of the church to resource and equip women with sound doctrine for sound living.

#### **Recommended Parachurch Organization and Resources:**

**Revive our Hearts** [www.reviveourhearts.com](http://www.reviveourhearts.com)

**Together for the Gospel** [t4g.org](http://t4g.org)

**The Gospel Coalition (for Women)**  
[www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org)

**Desiring God** [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org)

**9Marks** [www.9marks.org](http://www.9marks.org)

**Biblical Counselling Organizations**  
[www.biblicalcounseling.com](http://www.biblicalcounseling.com), [www.ibcd.org](http://www.ibcd.org),  
[www.christiancounseling.com](http://www.christiancounseling.com), [www.ccef.org](http://www.ccef.org)

**Challies** [www.challies.com](http://www.challies.com)

**Ministry to Women** [www.ministrytowomen.com](http://www.ministrytowomen.com)



## SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

### EQUIP AND RESOURCE WOMEN'S MINISTRY LEADERS

Time invested is time gained. Women's ministry leaders have a vast reach and significant opportunity to speak directly into the lives of women in the church. Women's ministry leaders who are equipped with trusted resources can point others to trusted alternatives with Biblical answers when issues arise. Women who value Biblical discernment will affect the tone and culture of a women's ministry. Women who understand who they are in Christ will be stronger at pointing others to what the Bible says about identity, personal responsibility and the use of spiritual gifts to unify and strengthen the church.

#### **Recommended Resources:**

***Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine or Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, Wayne Grudem**

***Visual Theology and The Discipline of Spiritual Discernment*, Tim Challies**

**Church's Manuel (Annual Report) with vision and mission statements**

***Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling Women*, Patricia Miller**

***Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul Tripp**

***The Deeper Life*, Dan Henderson**

***Do More Better*, Tim Challies**

**Biblical Counselling resourcing and theological training:**

**Association of Certified Biblical Counseling  
[Biblicalcounseling.com](http://Biblicalcounseling.com)**



**The Institute for Biblical Counseling &  
Discipleship [ibcd.org/resources/](http://ibcd.org/resources/)**

**Pastoral recommended resources and podcasts**

**Biographies of Women of Faith:**

***Eight Women of Faith*, Michael Haykin**

***Faithful Women and Their Extraordinary God*,  
Noel Piper**

**Formal Education: Heritage College and  
Seminary, Ontario Canada**

**Recommended Resources for Concern #3  
Distorted Identity:**

***Found in Him and Because He Loves Me*, Elyse  
Fitzpatrick**

***Alive in Him*, Gloria Furman**

***Who Am I?* Jerry Bridges**

***Finding God in My Loneliness*, Lydia Brownback**

***Knowing God*, J I Packer**

***None Like Him*, Jen Wilkin**

***Adorned: Living Out the Beauty of the Gospel  
Together*, Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth**

***Awe*, Paul Tripp**

***Accidental Feminist*, Courtney Reissig**





## APPROVE RESOURCES AND OUTSIDE PROMOTION

Whether it's a well-known video teacher, author, or guest speaker, pastoral leadership should approve all sources that take a teaching platform with women in the church. Consider the topic and content of the material being taught. Diverse teaching is widely available and heavily promoted to women seeking small group study. Revisit authors regularly. Many well-known trusted authors or speakers of the past may be teaching doctrines today not consistent with what pastoral leadership would teach from the pulpit. Consider asking guest speakers for a letter of recommendation from their pastor. Be sure that pastor is sound in consultation with your own pastor.

### **Recommended Resources:**

**Revive our Hearts** [www.reviveourhearts.com](http://www.reviveourhearts.com)

**Together for the Gospel** [www.t4g.org](http://www.t4g.org)

**The Gospel Coalition** [www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org)

**Desiring God** [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org)

**9Marks** [www.9marks.org](http://www.9marks.org)

**Biblical Counselling Organizations**

[www.biblicalcounseling.com](http://www.biblicalcounseling.com), [www.ibcd.org](http://www.ibcd.org),  
[www.ccef.org](http://www.ccef.org)

**Challies** [www.challies.com](http://www.challies.com)

**Ministry to Women** [www.ministrytowomen.com](http://www.ministrytowomen.com)



## **KEEP WOMEN FOCUSED ON THE BASICS—THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE, BIBLICAL PRAYER AND BIBLICAL FELLOWSHIP**

Women who think Biblically have tremendous influence in the health and discipleship of women in the church. Women in leadership need to stay faithful to the basic Biblical disciplines. Point women to resources that teach the fundamental disciplines for group study. Ministry to women creates great opportunity to teach women how to approach the Word; to pray the Word; to understand the purpose of the church; to understand the fundamental spiritual disciplines and doctrines; spiritual gifts, service, stewardship, submission, the roles of women. Maintaining intentional conversations with women in leadership can challenge and encourage them in these areas.

### **Recommended Resources:**

***Spiritual Discipline for the Christian Life,***  
**Don Whitney**

***Praying the Bible,*** Don Whitney

***Habits of Grace,*** David Mathis

***The Discipline of Grace, The Practice of***  
***Godliness, Pursuit of Holiness,*** Jerry Bridges

***The God Who Draws Near, an Introduction to***  
***Biblical Spirituality,*** Michael Haykin

***Disciplines of a Godly Woman,*** Barbara Hughes

**6:4 Fellowship Ministries, Strategic Renewal**  
**Resources** [www.strategicrenewal.com](http://www.strategicrenewal.com)

***The Grand Design, Male and Female He Made***  
***Them,*** Owen Strachan & Gavin Peacock



***Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood:  
A Response to Evangelical Feminism,***  
Piper and Grudem

**Formal Education: Heritage College and Seminary**



## KEEP BIBLE STUDIES WORD FOCUSED

Know the difference between a facilitated video or book study and a group that studies the Bible together. Both can be effective; and while pastoral leadership may find it necessary to entrust the teaching of women to a video driven study, Biblical literacy and the discipleship of women can fall short.

- Keep a healthy balance of scripture based Bible study.
- Teach women how to teach the Word. Consider replacing the trust given to a video teacher, to a woman trained and qualified to teach within your church. This will take time and will dramatically change the culture of a women's ministry.

### **Recommended Resources:**

***Women of the Word, Jen Wilkin***

***Taking God at His Word, Kevin DeYoung***

***Word-Filled Women's Ministry: Loving and Serving the Church, Nancy Guthrie***

***Help Me Teach the Bible Podcast, Nancy Guthrie***  
**[www.nancyguthrie.com](http://www.nancyguthrie.com). A must listen for every woman:**

**<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/help-me-teach-the-bible/why-do-the-hard-work-of-exposition/>**

***Women's Ministry in the Local Church, J. Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt***

**Charles Simeon Trust Women's Biblical Exposition Workshops and 1<sup>st</sup> Principles On-line course. The price point of the online course, \$19 U.S. is excellent.**

**Stewarding Your Leadership through Prayer PDF downloadable resource, How to Cultivate Change within Women's Bible Study PDF downloadable, Ministry to Women Recommended Resources PDF downloadable [www.ministrytowomen.com](http://www.ministrytowomen.com)**



## DEVELOP TEACHING WORKSHOPS

An effective way to change the culture of ministry to women in the church is to create opportunity for women to *think* alongside other women. Women need fellowship, but consider creating intentional conversations that prioritize Biblical thinking while cultivating fellowship. Women's events or nights-out that focus heavily on the 'fellowship' can often create breeding grounds for wisdom limited to one's experience or emotional perspective. Engaging teaching environments help keep women focused on essential doctrines that equip them for life's challenges and interruptions.

- Create short, interactive teaching workshops that engage women and connect women, but focus women on Biblical doctrines and how doctrine can specifically relate to women.
- Learn to value women by valuing their time. Keep it simple and focused. Most women can't commit to a full day. Consider a morning intensive or an evening that has a doctrinal emphasis.
- Keep them practical with paper and pen. Create round table interaction.
- Keep them coming back for more.
- Become a church that resources women who know how to think Biblically. Equip women with sound doctrine for sound living.

### **Recommended Resources:**

**Ministry to Women Consultation or Team Workshops** [www.ministrytowomen.com](http://www.ministrytowomen.com)



## SUMMARY

A shift in thinking and intentional effort to prayerfully consider the areas of concerns that can affect the spiritual health and discipleship of women within a women's ministry can effectively change the culture of ministry to women in the church and dramatically influence the spiritual condition of the church.

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## APPENDIX #1 MINISTRY TO WOMEN MINISTRY MODEL SUMMARY

### OBSERVATION

The discipleship of women is influenced by its women's ministry structure. For numerous reasons, the traditional structure of a women's ministry in the church misses the opportunity to invest in a woman's spiritual growth if that woman is unable to attend a structured women's event which tend to attract a small demographic of women.

### A WAY FORWARD | PARADIGM SHIFT

The discipleship of women requires a paradigm shift, from Women's Ministry to Ministry to Women.

#### **A Ministry to Women Mindset:**

- Affects all areas of leadership and creates a larger reach
- Fosters a leadership structure that is more inclusive to all women
- Encourages any woman who attends the church to feel part of ministry to women in the church
- Cultivates a ministry to women lingo to communicate this shift in thinking
- Encourages the women's ministry leadership team to fall under the overall leadership structure of the church and function within a Biblical model of leadership
- Gives opportunity for the women's ministry leader to work effectively with leadership and within the vision of the church
- Helps prevent or realign an autonomous women's ministry functioning independently within the church
- Intentionally recognizes smaller pockets of ministry to women happening organically within the church
- Reaches and engages the woman unable to attend traditional initiatives
- Helps resource and equip the discipleship of women
- Focuses on developing workshops, training, and discipling events unique to the stewardship of women
- Reaches beyond traditional women's ministry model and is willing to work with other ministries within the church to equip and meet the needs of women. For example, small group women leaders or spouses, young adult leaders, etc.
- Communicates a cooperative and collaborative ministry effort
- Strengthens the cohesiveness of women in the church and increases their growth and discipleship of others





## STRUCTURAL PROPOSAL

A Ministry to Women model is further elaborated on in the resource **“Changing the Culture of Ministry to Women in the Church”** and can be found at [www.ministrytowomen.com](http://www.ministrytowomen.com). Access code MTW2018.

### **A Ministry to Women Ministry Model:**

- Functions in alignment under the overall vision and mission of the church.
- A women’s ministry leader should have a full grasp of a ministry to women model, understand its purpose and embrace the challenge needed to encourage this ministry philosophy within her leadership team and church body. This will require consistent prayer, time to communicate and creativity in developing initiatives unique to each area of ministry.
- Encourages the women’s ministry leader to model personal stewardship, develop a good understanding of biblical womanhood and essential doctrines of the church and encourages her team through regular prayer collectives and attention to the Word.
- Prioritizes the discipleship of women in each area of a women’s ministry.
- Focuses on resourcing and equipping each area.
- (Re)Develops a ministry focus to be more consistent with a ministry to women philosophy of leadership. The priority is not to get rid of existing areas of ministry (bible study groups, prayer groups or annual events) but rather to maintain prioritizing the discipleship of women in hopes to reach a wider demographic.
- Watches for pastoral leadership to move ministry to women in a direction that the women’s ministry leader may not have considered.
- Becomes aware of smaller pockets of ministry to women happening in the church.
- Takes initiative to engage, encourage and equip women outside established initiatives in the church.
- Encourages inclusivity to all women—a sense of belonging—to ministry to women within the local church no matter if they attend established initiatives.
- Listens to the needs of women and makes great effort to encourage, include and equip.
- Has a good understanding of all areas of ministry within the church in order to point women to existing ministries to help develop their spiritual growth.



