

Starting a Women's Ministry

So... you believe God has laid it on your heart to begin a women's ministry in your church. But the main question you may have is "How do I start?" and "Where do I begin?"

Here are some steps to implement as you begin a women's ministry in your church.

1. Pray. Before you make any plans and start scheduling events, gather a group of like-minded women and spend some time praying about beginning a women's ministry in your church. One suggestion is that all of the women pray through certain passages in the Bible together as a way to unite your hearts. Whether you meet once or you meet once a week for a certain period of time, prayer should be the foundation of your ministry.

2. Share the vision with your pastor. Too many times women want to begin something new without asking permission from the proper authority. Make an appointment with your pastor and other appropriate church leadership to explain your desire to reach women. If you undermine his authority, you most likely will not have his blessing or share in your enthusiasm.

3. Investigate and educate yourself. Learn about women's ministry by doing some research. Find resources that will guide you through the maze of ways women's ministry can be done. Every church will find their own uniqueness, but you can learn from established ministries who have already paved the way of learning what works and what doesn't.

4. Assess the needs of women. You may think you know what your women want, but you may miss something that is an obvious need. Learn from your women by conducting a survey. Besides asking them about their needs, ask them if they are interested in helping with a certain area. You might just discover some new leadership!

5. Develop a purpose statement. How can you hit your mark if you don't have a goal or an end purpose in mind? In one sentence, put in writing the purpose of your ministry. If your church has a purpose statement, how will your statement support it? Search for scripture to support your purpose. You may also want a name for your ministry that supports your purpose statement. This will also help women in your church identify projects or events related to your ministry.

6. Consider childcare. When there are women, there are children. How will you provide for them? Who do you need to meet with in order to provide adequate care? How will you budget or provide for paid childcare workers? These are questions every women's ministry should investigate.

7. Determine financial needs. You may or may not receive a line item in your church's budget, but that doesn't mean you don't have to think about handling finances responsibly. Think through all the costs of what you are planning and don't overspend. If you want to gain the respect of your church's leadership and finance committee, be prudent and wise.

8. Organize leadership. You are not a lone ranger in making women's ministry happen. It will take a team who consists of women who are of different ages, life circumstances, spiritual gifts

and talents. The size of your team may vary, but the more women you involve in leadership, the more women you will involve in your ministry. Give each woman a job description and expectation. Meet with them regularly. Your leadership team will become a small group who becomes some of your closest cheerleaders.

9. Communicate with the church. Now that you've got some of the plans in place, how are you going to share it with your entire church? Look at several ways you can communicate: through Sunday School classes, church publications, church website and even developing an e-mail letter to the women in your congregation. Women want information, so don't leave them in the dark.

10. Plan a kick-off of your ministry. Have an all women's fellowship designed to unveil the new plan for ministry. Serve refreshments and offer childcare. Introduce key leadership and invite women to sign up to help out with different areas of ministry.

11. Evaluate and Celebrate. After a few months of ministry, take some time with your leadership team to evaluate how everything is going. Ask some hard questions about what's working and where improvements can be made. Celebrate the successes and don't forget to show your leadership appreciation. Never underestimate the value of volunteerism among your women and think of tangible ways you can show your appreciation for their hard work.