

A Women's Ministry of Purpose **Establishing Your Ministry Vision**

A strong women's ministry is going to be based in God's word, supporting the church's vision, with a purpose of using their uniqueness as women to reach and minister to women in their church and community. The ministry needs to establish its connection to the church's vision, and we do that by communicating with the church leadership. Once we have a clear understanding of the church's vision, we can then discuss as a ministry team the ways that we can support that vision. However, before we take the very first step, we need to bathe the ministry in prayer.

Praying over the ministry connects us to God, helps us focus on His desires for the ministry over our own, and softens our hearts toward the greater purpose. Praying puts us on God's team, working with Him and those He has called us to work with, versus depending on our own abilities.

When Peter and Andrew were fishing all night they caught nothing. Yet, when Jesus entered the scene, and they followed his instructions, they caught so many fish that the nets nearly broke (Luke 5:4-5). We can work very hard, and still be ineffective. Jesus will point us in the direction of where to cast our nets, where to put our energy.

In the book of Nehemiah, God called Nehemiah to return home to Jerusalem & rebuild the city that had been destroyed. There were four months between when God laid it on Nehemiah's heart and when He was actually instructed to go. During those four months, Nehemiah prayed. He needed to be spiritually and emotionally prepared for the task at hand. But, Nehemiah didn't work alone. He had a plan, trained the people, instructed and corrected. Nehemiah isn't just a great example of how to build a city, but also how to build a great ministry.

God called. Nehemiah prayed. Once there, Nehemiah's prayers didn't cease. Prayer is not just the foundation we build the team on, it's the mortar that keeps it together.

We are going to discuss building a team from scratch later, for now, we are going to assume for this process that there is an existing ministry team in place. After we have prayed over the ministry, met with the Pastor and church leadership to clarify the church vision, we can then begin to define the call. We do this by establishing the mission statement for the women's ministry.

First, let's refer back to the church mission statement and action points, from our previous segment.

Our Mission Statement:

Our mission is to connect people to the life changing power of Jesus Christ.

Our Action Points:

- *Connect People to Christ*
- *Connect People to the Church*
- *Connect People to the Community*

The women's ministry at this church adapted the church mission statement.

Our mission is to connect women to the life change power of Jesus Christ, by connecting women to Christ, the church and the community.

A simple word swap of “people” to “women” didn't take a lot of thought. The difference lies in the methods they are going to make those connections.

The church itself will be looking for ways to connect in a broader sense, they are looking to the community as a whole. Men, women. Married, single. Parents, empty nesters. Kids, youth, college aged, and retirees. The women's ministry is going to be able to focus more on events, activities, and studies that are appealing and are specific to women.

Some ministries, instead of a mission statement, will select a bible verse that they feel best encompasses the vision of their ministry.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:24-25

Hebrews 10:24-25 is a great example for a ministry that has a vision of encouragement and community.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Galatians 6:9)

Galatians might be a good choice for a women's ministry that is invested in missions or evangelism.

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33)

Matthew 6:33 would be appropriate for a women's ministry that is focused on seeking God's will above all other things.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)

John 15:5 would be used in a ministry that wants to remind itself to stay focused on Jesus.

Mission statements or scripture verses don't necessarily have to represent the vision of the ministry, but can instead serve as reminders, like John 15:5, of why we are doing ministry in the first place. The whole point of having a Mission Statement or pieces of scripture is to use it as a tool to keep the ministry focused and on track.

If every event, opportunity, or study is weighed against the mission statement or selected scripture, you can determine if it is the right fit for the ministry. If your mission statement and ministry team is in support of the church, you are in essence weeding out activities that do not support the church vision. There are so many things we can do as a ministry, and we can easily get caught up in trying to do them all. Everything may seem like a good idea, or fun... but if it isn't going to support the vision of the church, your time could be better spent. Everything that is good, is not always beneficial.

A mission statement, according to Sharon Jaynes, encapsulates in a few words or sentences the purpose of the women's ministry. It answers the question: “Why are we doing what we are doing?” A mission statement will clarify your goals, purpose and direction. It will be short, concise, compact,

declaration of what you hope to accomplish. It is the compass for the ministry, thus it needs to be reviewed occasionally for course correction or to chart a new journey.

Examples of mission statements:

The purpose of our women's ministry is to provide opportunities, equipping, and encouragement for all the women of our church to grow toward maturity in Christ through worship, study, service, fellowship and evangelism.

Women's ministries is committed to equipping women to know God and to glorify Him in our home, church, community, and the world.

If the mission statement is too long, too wordy, too complex, or too vague... it becomes entirely ineffective. You can't measure against it, if you can't even remember it. You can't measure against it, if you are not even sure what it means. You can't measure against it, if it is too vague and is open to interpretation.

Clear. To the point. Easily explained. Easily understood.

According to Dan Southerland, author of *Transitioning: Leading your Church through Change*, mission statements are a great way to help transition a ministry, because it makes the vision and purpose clear to those navigating the waters of change.

There are two ways to handle coming up with the mission statement.

1. Women's Ministry Leader and Church Staff Adopt the Mission Statement/Scripture
2. Women's Ministry Team Develops the Mission Statement or Identifies the Scripture.

There are times where you may combine the two, perhaps the the team comes up with some choices, but it is up the church leadership to pick the one they feel best fits with the vision of the church.

To begin the process of developing the mission statement, and a tool you may use in other facets of the ministry, you will want to bring the team together for a brainstorming session. From the book *Building an Effective Women's Ministry*, Sharon Jaynes has a great suggestions for running a brainstorming session:

- 1) Pray over the meeting, and that God will bring forward the mission statement that will guide the team in fulfilling His purposes for the ministry.
- 2) If there is not a designated ministry leader, pick someone who will facilitate the discussion, record the ideas, and keep the meeting on track.
- 3) Record all suggestions, a whiteboard or flip chart is helpful to ensure everyone can view suggestions.
- 4) Involve as many members of the team as possible, the facilitator may want to allow everyone to shout out their ideas, or ask each member directly for a suggestion.
- 5) Remind everyone that this is a brainstorming session, no idea is a bad idea, and ideas will often inspire more ideas. (The leader should be paying attention to see if the same idea, even if worded differently, are repeated.)
- 6) Start by asking the question: "What are the needs of the women in our church and community"
- 7) After you have the above answers, start narrowing the list down by themes or categories. For example: Bible Studies, Book Studies, Beginner Classes, etc. can all be group as "educating"

or “equipping”.

After you get to this point, narrow the list down by crossing out anything that doesn't mesh with the church's vision or mission. Just because you crossed the idea of the mission statement list doesn't mean it isn't important, or that you won't ever address it in some capacity. Instead, crossing it off means it isn't top priority for the ministry at this time.

Chances are you have someone who is on your team that is a writer, at this point you can hand over the narrowed down list to her. Let her compose the ideas in a short statement. If you don't, this is a great time to access anyone in the church body that is gifted in writing. Or, ask each woman on the ministry team to come up with a statement using the list, and email it to you. There may be one that stands out from the rest, or you may even combine parts of several good ideas into one great statement. After the mission statement is completed, and the team stands in agreement, bring it to church leadership for final approval. This would be the Pastor, elder, or deacon that oversees women's ministry in your church. In some cases, this role may be filled by a Pastor's wife.

Once you have the approval from the church, you are ready to break that mission statement down into the action steps that will eventually become your women's ministry program.