

Building A Women's Ministry **Finding Your Leader Team**

After you have received the approval from the church, and you have a vision for the ministry, it's time to put together your team. There are a few schools of thought on the actual structuring of team, the most common are:

- 1) A Team of 12 – Jesus had 12 apostles, therefore the women's ministry team should have 12 women. This is a great thought, but it can also be impractical. First, there is nothing biblical that states how many should be on a ministry team. If you have a small church with 50 women total, a team of 12 will be excessive. If your women's ministry does just one event a year, 12 is unnecessary. If you are a large church, hold multiple functions per month, you may find that 12 is the right number... or you might need more. Just keep in mind, the larger the team, the more personalities you will have that may conflict. Keep a strict number of members, can also cause us to lose focus when someone leaves the team because you “need” to fill that 12th spot. Another consideration is that you may not have 12 positions to fill, and what then becomes the purpose for the additional people on the team?
- 2) Standard Structure – President, Vice President; then positions that oversee certain job functions regardless of the actual event, such as: Treasurer, Secretary, Historian, Publicity, etc. These are standard protocol for organizational structures, but they may not apply to ministry or the titles may feel to corporate. Leader, Co-Leader, Finances, Hospitality, etc. may be a better fit.
- 3) Function Based – Women's Ministry Leader, Small Group Leader, Brunch Coordinator, Retreat Committee Head, Ministry Administrator (Secretary/Treasurer Combo), Meal Ministry Coordinator, Community Outreach Director, etc. These are all names that fit very specific roles within the ministry, and make it very clear who is responsible for which tasks. It also allows for you to add to the ministry leadership (or take away) without upsetting the leadership structure. This is my preferred structure for a ministry, such as this.
- 4) Group Input - This is a very loose leadership structure without defined roles. In this ministry, there is usually a leader, but that is the only designation. As each event is planned, a list of responsibilities is presented and everyone volunteers for what they want to do or where they can best contribute. Group effort is great, but as a ministry grows, it can become a bit chaotic. Also, strong personalities can take over the group, leaving others to feel voiceless, feeling as if they don't contribute or they are left to do the jobs no one else wants to do. This is the structure I recommend the least. If you start off with this structure, it can be very different to move away from it in the future, as the ministry grows.

I personally believe that in any organization it is best to begin your planning stages with the future in mind. See the big picture and form the team in a manner that points toward it. Structure is not only important in forming a ministry, it's biblical. Moses gave people specific jobs, so did Nehemiah when rebuilding the temple and city. In the very beginning, in the book of Genesis, God structured and ordered the universe! Structure and direction from the very beginning will make the growth process easier on the team, and the church. It keeps everyone on the same page, with the same end goal in mind.

In order to build a team, you must have people to fill those roles. You may have a few women already whom you have been speaking with, which are ready and willing to get to work. If you don't have any one enlisted yet, or your still looking for more, there are a few ways to go about it.

- Ask your Pastor, or the Pastor's wife, for suggestions on who you should approach.

- Ask the other women you are working with, if they have any suggestions.
- Pray that God will reveal the right women to you.

Something worth considering, in forming your team, is to create a team that has diversity. Yes, it is fun to work in ministry alongside our friends. We already get along, and think alike. However, that can also cause you to create a calendar that caters to your interests and people who are, simply, like you. I would suggest taking a look at your church, who are the people that make up the body of women? Have women from different ethnicities, different ages or stages of life, or have different life experiences as part of the team. The leadership team should represent and look like the church body.

A woman with a background in missions, is definitely going to be geared toward community service projects. A woman who works, and a woman who is a stay home mom, will both give you valuable insights into the needs of women like themselves. If you are interested in bringing diversity into your church, it begins with your leadership teams. A team of different colors, life experiences, and callings will create a women's ministry team that is prepared for the work ahead of them, able to reach further into the community, and glorifies God in our unity. Women are being divided from each other every day over silly controversies. Satan seeks to divide. When we don't just put our differences aside, but even more so EMBRACE those differences, loving in Christ together, serving God together, we set an example for the entire body of women, the church, and even into the community.

When you have formed your list of potential team members, have a small gathering at your home or local coffee shop. Invite these women, and be clear about WHY you are inviting them. It's possible they may have other commitments, other callings, or they are just not interested in women's ministry. Informing the women ahead of time what the meeting is about, allows them the opportunity to respectfully decline before the gathering. Then, you have the opportunity to seek out new potential team members.

Gathering Agenda:

1. Greet everyone, thank them for coming, open in prayer.
2. Announce the formation of the women's ministry.
3. Share the vision/purpose of the women's ministry.
4. Discuss the various positions you are looking to fill.
5. Answer questions they may ask.
6. Inquire who is interested in serving, hand them a spiritual gifts test, have printed copies available.
7. Instruct them to take the test, and to get back to you with their top three spiritual gifts, and what positions in which they would be interested serving.

It is reasonable to set a deadline for the women to respond. If a woman seems unsure, have her take the spiritual gifts test. It may be just what is needed to show her that she has valuable talents to offer the ministry. Strongly encourage them women to pray about the decision, and discuss it with her family before she commits to the team. You want to make sure that her family supports her joining since they will be giving up time with her while she serves.

After you receive the spiritual gift test results compare them to the positions each woman is interested in. Pray that God will help you discern the right fit. Call each woman personally, and offer her the position. She will accept or decline. If you are still short a few volunteers for the ministry, you can ask the women, as you call, if they have any recommendations. Have another gathering, and fill the remaining spots, if needed.

Since this is a new ministry, and you may be having women who are serving for the first time, I would recommend reviewing these positions at the end of 3 – 6 months. It may be possible to shift positions. It also allows the women a trial period, in which they know they can step down from the ministry if it isn't the right fit. Women are more likely to volunteer if they know they can step down after a few months, without hurting feelings or letting the team down. And, as a leader, you want women who are going to be committed to the team and the vision.

Once you have built your team, you can begin to define the ministry goals. If you haven't created a mission statement, now would be the time. (Refer back to Topic 4 from this course). If you have a loose vision, now would be the time to tighten it up. This might be a good meeting to invite your Pastor, or whomever is overseeing the ministry, to come in and share the vision of the church and answer questions. Having your Pastor on board from the start is much easier than trying to reel him in later.

Make an effort to spend some time getting to know each other as a group. The more familiar you are with each other as individuals, the better you will work together as a team. You will become invested in each others lives instead of just seeing each other at ministry meetings. This sets and example not just for the women in your church, but other ministry groups as well. It will also give you time to discuss things like:

- How frequently do we want to meet? Every other month? Once a month? Twice a month?
- Where are we going to meet? What is a central location for everyone?
- Will we meet during the day, or the evening? Weekdays or weekends?
- Do we want a quick cut and dry meeting, or do we want time to fellowship together?
- How soon do we want to start having events? Immediately? Do we want to take a few months to prepare and possibly attend a leadership training?

A great recommendation is to pick some Women's Ministry leadership books, and share them with the team. You can have everyone read the same book, or each woman reads a different one. Next time you meet, you can discuss the points or ideas that really stood out. When you have never served in women's ministry before this can be helpful in giving you a launching point to work from.

Books like *Fresh Ideas for Women's Ministry* or *Building an Effective Women's Ministry* can give you a step by step walk through of putting together a women's ministry program. They will cover topics from talking to your Pastor, budgets, and planning events. They are pretty much checklists to follow, use what is pertinent to your ministry, discard the rest. Keep them for future reference, as your ministry grows.

Other books, like *Resource Guide for Women's Ministry* or *Women's Ministry in the Local Church*, address concepts related to Women's Ministry function. They are a bit broader, but still cover great information.

Finally, there are books like *Word-filled Women's Ministry* which will challenge and redefine how we view our role in Women's Ministry. (*This is a great book to share with your Pastor, if you are trying to get him on board!*)

I have an extensive library on Women's Ministry, ministering to women, and leadership that I pulled

from in preparation for this class. They are not only valuable to teaching courses like this, but also to those who are in ministry leadership and developing future leaders. We are going to discuss more about leadership development in the upcoming segments.

As a final thought, I'd like to leave you with something to consider, and speak with your Pastor about in regards to building your team. What are the standards and expectations of leaders in your church? Find out what these expectations are, putting it writing, and have each woman fill out an agreement form when she accepts the position. Some denominations have very strict rules for leaders, like abstaining from alcohol. Others, are more interested in character and commitment. Find out what your church expects, put it in writing, it is really important for your leaders to know these expectations in advance. Then, they can make the decision with full understanding of what is expected of them. Some possible points to include: Regular service attender. Small Group participant/leader. Exhibits signs of spiritual growth. Faithfully prepared for meetings and duties. Some, may even go so far as to require a commitment of six months or one year. These details I leave up to you.