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Women can be Disciples too

How to reach and disciple women

My passion is to see women fulfill their full potential in the kingdom of God.

In many cultures, women are relegated to a secondary position in society. Jesus came to change that.

As we read the scriptures we can see that there were women who followed Jesus and He never turned them away.

In fact, when he arose from the dead, He instructed a woman (Mary) to “Go and tell”. We can be confident that even as women, we have his authority and his blessing to “go and tell” as well.

When Jesus was on the mountain, before He was taken up to Heaven, he told all those standing there, including the women, “Go and make disciples of all nations....”

He was not only talking to the 12 men apostles but to all standing there with Him and to all who believe on Him. What an awesome privilege and responsibility to go and make disciples! Women need to be empowered and equipped to do just that.

The percentage of women in this world is estimated to be 51% Slightly more than men. A whopping total of 143,368,343 females in the United States alone!

Who is going to reach them?

I feel that if the women take their responsibility to disciple, nurture and take care of the new women, we will begin to see women become strong disciples who are a strong force and important part of the Kingdom of God.

When women come into the church, they are no doubt blessed by the worship and the preaching of the Word, but they desperately need another woman to come up to them talk to them and try to establish relationship with them.

One of the best ways to do this is to have the established women in the church be on look-out for the new women.

Meeting new people at church or other events

All believers should be trained how to greet the new people who come to church and how to start conversation with them, asking them questions and trying to set up a meeting time with them.

Asking people, “Are you new here?” is not the greatest opener. Hi, I’m ____ (shake hands if appropriate) I’ve been coming to church here for quite a while. How did you like the service?” is much better. Ask them if they live nearby and ask them about their family. During the course of the conversation try to find something in common with that person. Does she like sports? Is she a homemaker? Does she have children? Does she work full time? What are things she may would like to do?

You don't have to ask all those questions, obviously, but when you discover and get an idea what this person may like, you can make a suggestion. You could try at that point to set up a coffee break, lunch near their work place, or a tennis match. Whatever you do, try to establish that you really are interested in getting to know this person. Try to seek out those you are attracted to and feel that they would be similar to you in things they might like. In other words, since I am not a sports person, I would not really be too helpful to someone who is tennis pro and comes to church in their sportswear. I would look for someone who perhaps dresses similar to me, who is about the same age as I am and someone who looks like she has a personality to which I could relate.

It would be ideal if you could prepare name (business) cards for you to give to others when you make an appointment with them.

You can say, "I really do want to get together some time this week, can we do lunch on Tuesday?" And then, "Here is my card if there is anything you need before that, I would love to hear from you." Be sure to get their name and phone number too.

Try to be sensitive to her and let her talk. She may express a need and you can just stop right there and pray for her. God can help you minister to her even if she is not a believer yet. Prayer is something almost everyone receives and feels love through it.

The Followup Phone Call

If possible, try to call this person within 24 hours. You don't have to talk long, just make sure they know that you are thinking of them and if they had mentioned anything in your conversation, it would make them feel special if you would bring that up.

Also within 48 hours you should plan to see them at their house or have made an appointment with them, preferably early in the week. Tuesdays would be a great day to dedicate to visitation of new ones.

Before the appointment:

It is so important to prepare your heart before you go to minister to the new person. Pray and ask God to help you know what to share with this person. And ask God to fill your heart with love and compassion

and understanding toward that person. Ask God to lead you in your Bible reading to prepare your heart and show you what that person needs. Prepare your heart so you can be open. Paul talked about opening his heart wide to the people. This is what we must do.

Prepare to treat this person as a long time friend. You do this in faith because you believe they will be. You must also believe that you have something to give to them and that they will want to embrace what you have.

Be sure you deal with your heart before you go out, and determine that you will not judge them no matter what, that you will accept and love them just as Jesus would.

If we are to minister to hurting, unsaved people or new believers, we must first resolve that even though they are not perfect, neither are we. And we can minister grace to them because we know Jesus took both our sins on himself.

The appointment:

When you meet with this person for the first time, she may be a bit uneasy or nervous wondering if she is going to have to reveal her life to you and if you will accept her. The very first thing we must do with a person is to make them feel comfortable, by being real with them and vulnerable about our own lives. They need to know that you don't think you have it all together and that you just want to be friends with them.

Do things they like to do. Don't play a hostess, but be sensitive to what they like. Talk about things you would talk about to make a friend and when you get on to a topic, be sure to let her feel that you accept her views as important and that you are not judging her for saying what she wants to say.

At some point in the conversation you can turn things to spiritual things. For instance you could ask her how she heard about the church and then reassure her you are glad she came so you could get to know her and be friends.

If you sense she is eager to talk about spiritual things or her life, you can wait and listen for clues. Find out

where she is on her spiritual journey and try to bring her one step closer to a better relationship with Jesus.

This is not the time or place to argue or try to explain doctrinal differences. Keep clear of peripheral issues such as religion and stay right on the central issue – which is a closer relationship with Jesus.

Also, there is no need to feel the pressure to be her counselor. A friend can refer people to a counselor, but the role of a friend is to develop a heartfelt trust.

If the person has never been exposed to Christianity: Have you ever heard the story about Jesus? Have you seen “The Passion” movie?” or some other popular spiritual media.

If the person is not a Christian but is religious: Have you ever attended church regularly?

If the person is trying to have a relationship with God but is bound by drugs, alcohol, immoral sex, or other abuses: What are the biggest struggles in your life?

If this person is young mother, seems a little distraught and needs encouragement. Tell her about a new mothers support group or a cell for young mothers. Assuming also that you are making these available.

If this person is a career person : Have you ever thought about what is most satisfying about life?

If this person is devastated by trauma or a recent bad experience: Introduce her to a counselor in the church or Healing Streams program.

Don't push or try to fix them, just be sensitive to the things they share with you. Nothing that people say or feel is dumb. It may be a different viewpoint than you have ever had but it is still how they are perceiving life, so try to be understanding and

accepting. This love will be the thing that draws women into a relationship with Jesus.

You can ask them if they are interested in getting together once a week to enable you to explain about some keys to living successfully. It is important that they know about how to have a relationship with Christ.

Let's assume they are interested in making an appointment to study one on one with you. The booklet that we have used is entitled One to One. It is available from <https://www.everynationonline.org>

It is designed to share with your sister once a week. You can do it over coffee, lunch or in the park or workplace, at her house or yours.

The discipleship sessions

The first few times you get together, you are going to need to spend some time just being friends and sharing in a warm way. Then at some point after a

few minutes, pull out your One to One book. Then you can read it along with her one of the chapters. This will take about 15 minutes unless she has comments or questions.

You will want to make it as comfortable as you can while trying to keep to the lesson as much as possible.

After you read the lesson, you can ask her if she has any questions or anything she is wondering about. She should share at this point. This is a chance to practice being a good listener. This is not the time to “preach” to her but to try to understand what she is saying. The more we listen, the more time we will have to wait on the Lord for an appropriate response.

Ask her if there is anything that you both can pray about and when she is sharing listen attentively. She needs to know you really care about her and her situations.

Pray for her and allow time for her to pray if she feels that she wants to.

A very important part of this whole process is that we always share in a way to show that we have a hope

that this person will be able to share the same things she is learning and experiencing with another woman that she knows so that the kingdom keeps advancing and reproducing. We try to encourage after every lesson to ask two questions:

1. How can I obey Jesus in light of the things I have read today?
2. With whom can I share these truths? (Hopefully within the next 24 hours.)

Cell groups

There are different kinds of cell groups:

- Outreach cells for lost people.
- Discipleship cells for new believers
- fellowship and prayer groups
- Bible Study groups
- Interest related cell group

The following are some examples and ideas in the forming of Friendship Cells. They would occur regularly and would be arranged according to age, interest, and demographics. The goal would be to provide the foundation for a network of good works across the city.

- A group could be started to cater to help with raising children. The programming could cover lessons on conception to birth, early motherhood, the toddler zone, school age, and even the empty nest syndrome. The goal would be to provide inspiration and help across every area of family life.
- A group could be started to encourage women who work outside the home.
- Another group could be formed for those women who are single and want to be completely devoted to God and his service.

Dividing women from the men creates a warm and safe atmosphere that they can let their barriers down. The church women's ministry is vital to the growth and health of the church. May the Lord help you as you seek to develop a wonderfully fruitful ministry to women. What wonderful things to look forward to as you reach out to women, disciple them, get them involved in service, and teach them to disciple others.

Ideas for reaching out and serving:

Gifts of Strength – Gifts to parents of children in hospital.

Help Line – A phone call from victorious women who have been through the same or similar situations. Just an encouraging phone call only ... you will make it!

Prayer Works – Woman who will diligently pray for all ministries of the church

Exemplary Older Woman Works – Older woman available to give advice to younger women. Those who have ‘been there and successfully done it’ before.

Research Works – Give finances into the research of HIV/AIDS, Cancer and Heart Disease –

Clean Sweep – Sweeping up the neighbor’s leaves as well as your own.

Actions Speak – Flower day to all the shop assistants in the shops where you regularly shop.

Poetry in Motion – Send a card with a nice verse to someone.

Ring Ring – Just ring and have a chat with someone who you know lives on their own and take them out for lunch if they are able to get out.

Paper Oh! – Hand deliver to their door your neighbors' local newspapers.

Wash day happy – Bring in the neighbors' washing for them.

TIME AND ENERGY IDEAS:

Heart to Heart – Pool of human resources to bless those experiencing tragedy.

The Beat – Groups of woman who clean houses or make meals for those who are sick or needy.

Adopt a Friend – Make an effort to become a friend of someone in church, someone who is not in relationship with Jesus, a student who has just moved to your town and would benefit from a family environment.

Bringers – Woman available to bring and coordinate to bring woman and children to women's groups and church.

Baby-sitters – Offers to baby-sit and give the couple a night out.

Food works – Cook a meal for a neighbor/family.

Iron-a-thon – Do a solo moms or an older persons ironing for them.

Born To Shop – Offer to do shopping for the sick or elderly.

Lady Drivers – Drive someone to their doctor's appointment. Offer to drive a busy mom's children to soccer, school functions, church etc.

Sweet Things – Bake a cake or something delicious for someone.

Soft Touch – Pamper day for 5 friends.

House minders – Offer to house-sit while folks are away on holidays.

Dig Deep – Do the garden for your neighbor, the sick, frail or solo parent.

Free Pass – Pay for the tolls of the 1 or 2 cars that are behind you.

Surprise! – Visit the elderly with your children.

Suds Away – Wash someone's car.

Sip & Clean – Clean cupboards for people unable to clean their own for whatever reason.

Kids Galore – Free Child care in centers across your town.

1+1=2 – Do some kind of workshop on how to budget.

Hands of Warmth – Go visit the Children's Hospital and bring a smile to a little face.

Vollunteers Are Great – Volunteer to do an outreach with some kind of charity program.

Squeaky Clean – Pay to have their pooch washed when you organize to have your own pooch washed.

Party Animal – Have a neighborhood party for no reason at all – invite the people on both sides and across the street.

Moms Rule! – Take a mom with young kids somewhere where the kids can play and she can have a coffee and relax, and you do all the supervising of the kids

Green Grass – Mow the front lawn of the people next door.

Play Detectives – Find out from your church those who have practical needs that you can meet...and do it/them.

Love the Aged – Pampering day at an Aged Care Facility – visit those the church already has contact with, manicures, massages etc.

Bless a Senior Day – Take a Senior out somewhere or stay at home and do something that needs doing for them.

Angel Day – Help someone from the congregation that needs help of some kind. Anything from a visit to something more practical.

Young Forever – Take out a young person; be sure to check with their parents.

Movie Time – Invite neighbors to see a movie with you or have a showing in your home with popcorn.

Home Church Day – A day of getting into anything around the church that needs doing, from rearranging cupboards to cleaning out the garage.

NO TIME AT ALL IDEAS:

Meals with Smiles – Invite neighbors over for lunch or dinner.

Roll ‘em out – Put out AND return the neighbors’ garbage bins.

Games Night – Invite neighbors over for a fun night of games.

Dogs Rule – Walk the neighbor’s dog the same time you walk your own.

Just a small word – Thank everyone in your day that helps you in any way at all!

Thoughtfulness – Find out what magazines your neighbors like to read, if appropriate subscribe them up for a time.

Christmas Giving – Pass the neighbors a Christmas present to put under their tree from your family.

Free Time – Pay for a family pass to the zoo, theme park, or movies etc.

Birthday Bliss – Once aware of someone’s birthday, send them a card, maybe also Christmas cards.

FINANCIAL SOWING IDEAS:

Heaven on Earth – Organize a ‘Dial an Angel’ to do the housework for someone having a baby (if you’re not available to do it yourself) so the house is nice and clean when they come back from hospital.

Feel Good – Pay for a neighbor to have a facial, massage or the like.

Financial Works – Business people who are willing to offer financial help to those the church deem are in real financial need. Not paying people’s debts but helping them through the really tough times.

Night on the Town – Pay for a baby-sitter and for the parents to go out to dinner. Cover the cost of the whole night.

Research Works – Give finances into the research of HIV/AIDS; Cancer and Heart Disease

Picnics R Fun – Invite neighbors out for a picnic day, you supply everything!

EXTRAVAGANT IDEAS:

Giving is Great – Pay for someone you know who would never ordinarily go away to go away on a holiday.

Mortgage Payment – A year or a month for someone.

Car – Buy one for someone, new or second hand.

Clothes – A new wardrobe.

I got these ideas from The Sisterhood.

Their site is full of ideas and more from:

<http://hillsong.com/colour/sisterhood/tool-kit>

<https://www.pinterest.com/coloursistahood/>