



GROWING A VIBRANT WOMEN'S MINISTRY

If you believe that you have a God-given passion to see a women's ministry develop in your church, to disciple women in their faith and to reach women in your community with the love of Jesus then here are a few tips to help you begin.

Just like planting a garden, we need to do the groundwork. This involves –

- Purpose – Identifying the dream God has given you.
- Preparation – Preparing your heart
- Planting the seed – Imparting the dream
- Planning – Shaping the Women's Ministry
- Plowing – Cultivate the Ministry
- Participation – Involve other women and build a team
- Prayer – Developing a Prayer Ministry team
- Promotion - Showcase

Purpose

The Lord has given you a dream, a glorious purpose to fulfill to minister to women. Write it down. Spend time with the Lord and allow Him to reveal the intentions of your heart and what his will is concerning the women in your church. Pray with Him and meditate on his Word. God lays particular burdens on our hearts and equips us with certain gifts and abilities and experiences to prepare us for that ministry. Spend time discovering your God-given dream.

"I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out - plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for." (Jeremiah 29: 10-11 MSG)

Preparation

Laying a foundation for a vibrant, women's ministry starts with you. Your heart needs to belong to the Lord. Ministry to women is not about running great programs or duplicating successful ones, rather it is about sharing our heart, our faith and our experience of our Saviour with other women. If our heart is not focused on Christ, our acts of service are only offered in the flesh. Ask God for the filling of His Spirit and make time to spend with him alone. Pray with Him, meditate on His Word, listen to him and seek His will and be open to his call on your life.

Planting the Seed – Impart the Dream!

1. Share your dream with your Church Leadership team.

Allow your leadership to hear the passion and vision God has placed on your heart and the benefits of a women's ministry as well as how many people it may involve. It is important that the church leadership endorse this ministry and that the ministry comes under the auspice of your church and in-line with its overall purpose and mission. Establish your accountability with the leadership team, who you report to and when ministry reports need to be made available for the leadership team.

See the BUV Women's Ministry resource – 'Working with the Senior Pastor'.

Set a date to hold a women's forum for starting a women's ministry.

2. Organize a Women's Leadership Network

Invite women who head up various ministry groups in the church that minister to women and who can represent that ministry. Ministry leaders might come from playgroup, craft, BWF, Bible Study, Ministry to shut-in's, seniors, youth etc. Invite them to participate in the forum to develop a vibrant women's ministry that is inclusive of their ministry. They will bring their understanding of the women within their context and their ideas and service being administered already in reaching them. Woman leaders representing their ministries will form your Women's Leadership Network but they are not necessarily your Women's Ministry Team. This Women's Leadership Network should intentionally gather together with your Women's Ministry team each quarter to pray, discuss the needs of the women they serve and plan for ways to reach them collectively under the vision of your newly formed Women's Ministry. *See the BUV Women's Ministry resource – 'Creating an Effective Women Leadership Network'.*

3. Form a team of interested women

To create a Women's Ministry Team, pray and ask God to raise-up women with a genuine interest in being involved in the women's ministry team. Identify potentials – through their maturity in Christ, their ministry to women and who display genuine warmth towards women. Personally invite these ladies to come to your women's forum. Ensuring that you gather a good cross-section of women from your church. Including women with a variety of experiences and ministries will richly enhance your team with the gifts and skills you will need to uniquely minister to your women. From this gathering of interested ladies you will be able to form a Women's Ministry team. The women who step forward to take up leadership roles will usually be seasoned women who have been involved in various ministries of leadership over the years. If only a few women respond to your invitation, continue to meet. Remember Jesus said, *"Where two or three are gathered, in My Name, there I will be also"*.

4. Survey the needs of women in your church and community

Before you meet with the women's forum, provide an evaluation or survey tool for women in your church. Ask them what they would like from a women's ministry. *Sample the 'Women's Need Survey' a BUV Women's Ministry resource.* Consider how to distribute the survey to your church women, either by mail, giving it out personally, by making phone calls and through the Women's Leadership Network.

Ensure that you collect the answers and have them prepared for your women's forum. It is helpful to have some accurate statistics that highlight your women's needs and preferences.

Planning

God is the one who calls us to ministry. If that is so, then we need to clearly define the purpose of that ministry: why the ministry exists. When the purpose of your ministry is determined, it will help you stay focused on what God has called you to do.

5. Put your ideas together on how you want to reach the women

As a women's forum, discuss together how you want to reach the women. See *BUV Women's Ministry resource – 'Developing a Women's Ministry Workshop'* a 2 hour workshop. Brainstorm and record your group's comments to understand the needs of your group.

Questions to include:

1. Who are we trying to reach? Why?
2. Who is absent from our group? Why?
3. What are the greatest needs of the women in this group?
4. What are the barriers to establishing this ministry to women and how can they be removed?
5. What are our greatest strengths and weaknesses as a group of women?

Determine what changes need to be made (if re-organizing)

1. How has our group changed over the years?
2. In what areas is change needed?
3. What improvements can be made to existing ministries and new possibilities?

6. Create a vision/purpose statement

Ask God to give you a vision of what He wants from your ministry to women. Ensure that your vision comes under your churches vision statement. Your purpose statement should be an extension of this as you specifically minister to women. You don't want to become an autonomous group, but rather work in with the vision God has given the whole church. Remember to keep it short and specific and focused on key verbs. A mission statement from the word of God can also serve to keep your purpose in focus. Give yourself time to pray and allow God to direct you in this. See the *BUV Women's Ministry resource - 'Developing a Vision'* to help you prepare a vision and mission statement.

Short/long term goals

Establish group goals. Some examples might be:

1. To share the Gospel
2. To deepen the spiritual life of each member
3. To make everyone belong and a valued member
4. To provide ministry opportunities
5. To create a vision for touching the world.

Cultivating the Ministry

7. Plan a Yearly Calendar of activities

When you have defined the needs of the women in your church and community, you can put together a specific plan of action.

- i) Begin by establishing a least one Bible Study for women
 - ii) Plan a kick-off event for fellowship e.g. Weekend away or Ladies Nite out
- Provide fun events as well as fellowship times for developing friendships.
See BUV Women's Ministry resource – 'Annual Planning Guide'.

Participation – Involve other Women on the Team

8. Build your Women's Ministry Leadership Team

Establish a core group of leaders and determine the format of the women's ministry team and the role of those in the team e.g. officers, leadership team, core group etc. Delegate these responsibilities among your leadership and among the helpers and remember that every woman needs to be valued and given opportunity to serve. Meet at least once a month for prayer, planning and nurturing of one another.
See the BUV Women's Ministry resource – 'Establishing a Leadership Team', 'Role Descriptions for Team Leaders' and 'Nurturing a Leadership Team'

Prayer – Water the Ministry

A Prayer Ministry team is an important component of your ministry. To develop a Prayer Ministry team, invite women who have a heart for intercessory prayer and women who may not be able to contribute to the ministry physically, but could commit to praying for leaders, events and the attending women. A Prayer Ministry team will cover all events before, during and after, asking for the Spirit of God to touch the women's hearts.
See the BUV Women's Ministry resource – 'Developing a Prayer Ministry Team'.

Promote – Showcase the Ministry

Promote, advertise, announce, display and invite women to your women's ministry events. Have an advertising stand in a prominent place e.g. front foyer, so that women can see the events. Find someone in your church who is creative and can design invitations and posters and DVD's snapshots. Include bulletin spots and announcements from the front endorsed verbally by the Senior Pastor. Ask if you can share with the congregation, the vision and purpose of the women's ministry. Update your events and include them on the main church yearly calendar. Personally invite new women to your events. Ensure that the ministry is intergenerational and embraces all women. Watch your ministry GROW!!!
See the BUV Women's Ministry resource – 'Promoting Your Ministry'.