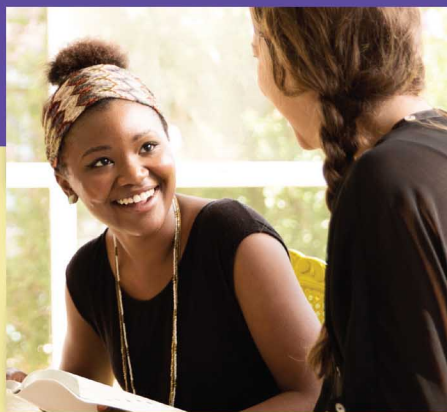


F O C U S O N T H E F A M I L Y ®

LEADING WOMEN TO THE HEART OF GOD



C R E A T I N G A D Y N A M I C
W O M E N ' S M I N I S T R Y



L Y S A T E R K E U R S T
G E N E R A L E D I T O R

Foreword by H. B. LONDON

E I G H T

PROMOTING YOUR WOMEN'S MINISTRY



Glynnis Whitwer

STEP 1: BUILDING A FIRM FOUNDATION

Beginning with the End in Mind

At the very large and busy university I attended, it was important to complete a Senior Check-Out in one's junior year. This document outlined the courses a student needed to take over the next two to three semesters in order to graduate. Due to its importance, the university encouraged students to complete this document and have it approved by a counselor. It was in a counselor's office that I read a hand-drawn poster that said "Plan Ahead for Your Senior Check-Out." I wasn't impacted by the words as much as the way they were written. They



started at the left of the poster in big, bold strokes, but three-quarters of the way across, the letters got smaller and smaller, and eventually curved down the right side of the poster. The writer's point was obvious: Plan ahead.

What an accurate portrayal of so many elements of life and ministry. Many times we begin a project or ministry with the best intentions—our confidence level is high. But as distractions or challenges nudge us off our path, we can wander away from our original intent.

It's a well-known and true axiom, "If you don't know where you are going, how will you know when you get there?" I believe this is true for women's ministry as well. Before beginning any aspect of ministry, it's important to have a plan and to know your purpose. It's important to begin with the end in mind. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to create a mission statement.

Creating a Mission Statement

A mission statement is a critical element of any ministry. Sometimes called a purpose statement, it can be one sentence or a paragraph, so long as it states your goals. It clarifies your purpose for existing. Once complete, it guides your decision making and gets people excited about being in ministry together.

Unlike a business mission statement, which might be influenced by economic trends and profit and loss goals, the mission statement of a Christian ministry should always be guided by the Holy Spirit. The writing of a mission statement starts and ends with seeking the will of the Lord for your church and praying for wisdom and inspiration from the Holy Spirit.

It's important to involve others in the prayer and preparation, so gather a group of women with a heart for the ministry and pray to agreement before finalizing your statement.



Here are some practical tips for creating your women's ministry mission statement:

- ✦ Answer the question: What does God want for the women in this church?
- ✦ Review other ministries' mission statements for ideas.
- ✦ Keep it short and easy to remember.
- ✦ Have it reflect the values of your church.
- ✦ Keep it visible—frame it and hang it on your wall and incorporate it into promotional material.

SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENTS

1. Focus on the Family: To cooperate with the Holy Spirit in disseminating the gospel of Jesus Christ to as many people as possible, and, specifically, to accomplish that objective by helping to preserve traditional values and the institution of the family.
2. Proverbs 31 Ministries: Proverbs 31 Ministries is dedicated to glorifying God by touching women's hearts to build godly homes. Through Jesus Christ, we shed light on God's distinctive design for women and the great responsibilities we have been given. With Proverbs 31:10–31 as a guide, we encourage and equip women to practice the Seven Principles of the Proverbs 31 Woman.
3. Mothers Of Preschoolers, International: MOPS, International exists to nurture every mother of preschoolers by meeting her distinct needs to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Communicating Your Vision

If you have written a well-thought-out and prayed-through mission statement, it will spark a flame of hope and excitement in those who hear



it. They will see the potential for God to do mighty things through your women's ministry, and they will grasp hold of this vision, making it theirs.

Women hunger to be part of something that has meaning and eternal value. As you communicate your mission statement to the women in your church, they will become a ministry team, able to accomplish much more together than alone.

Using Your Mission Statement as a Planning Guide

Once you have defined the goals for your ministry it is much easier to meet them.

Now as you plan events for the women in your church, use your mission statement as a guide. Identify events that will fulfill the goals of the ministry and schedule them on a calendar. Evaluate where your ministry could be in five years and determine what it will take to get there. The benefit of scheduling events over a period of a year or more is that you develop a "big picture" mentality.

Advance planning also allows you to reach out to women in all stages of life. Start with evaluating the needs of the women in your church. Do you have a lot of young mothers and wise, older women? Consider a mentoring program. Are there women struggling in their marriages? Consider a class on becoming a godly wife. As you are making plans to meet the needs of women, offer programs at a variety of times of day and days of the week. This will allow participation of women employed outside the home and those non-employed.

Another benefit of planning is that you are able to meet needs outside of your church, thus creating a link for many women who might otherwise not visit. Perhaps there is a large population of single mothers in your area. Can you offer a Saturday morning budgeting class, with child care available?

Before scheduling any event or class, consider if it agrees with the mission statement and meets the goals set for the ministry. If it does,



proceed with confidence, knowing that you are following the Lord's leading each step of the way.

Planning Each Event

Goal setting is important for individual events and starts with a team approach.

Before planning a specific event, gather the women in your core leadership group and pray for direction. As the Lord sets the agenda, evaluate how this event supports your mission and develop specific goals. Then, as you make decisions, you can refer to your goals. Remember to communicate these goals to all volunteers.

A few years ago, my church had a vision to reach women who did not attend church. After prayer, we agreed that in order to accomplish this we would plan an event that was not on a Sunday or in our main sanctuary. Our goals were for the women in our church to invite friends to a non-threatening, fun event, where they would be encouraged and the Good News would be told. As we reviewed the calendar, we scheduled a Mother's Day Tea and a Christmas Cookie Exchange, and our planning began.

The planning involved a team of women who understood the purpose. As we considered every decision, we kept the goals in mind. From the first impression to what the ladies would take home with them, we considered how to reach someone who didn't currently have a relationship with the Lord.

As we follow the Lord's leading and plan events to minister to women, we need to remember the results are up to Him. Our part is to be obedient—to seek His heart in all we do. We are the planters and the waterers, but God makes things grow (1 Corinthians 3:6). This knowledge releases us from a performance mentality, and puts the focus rightly on the One who deserves all the glory for the things He has done.



STEP 2: PROMOTING YOUR MINISTRY'S SPECIAL EVENTS

Identifying Your Target Market

You know the truism about the “best laid plans.” We can have the most delightful, spiritually enriching events planned for the women in our church, but they need to attend to benefit.

Most of us know numbers don't equal success. It shouldn't matter whether ten or one hundred women show up at our midweek Bible study. We know God values our obedience and looks at our heart's intent.

However, God loves and desires to reach every person on this earth. So while we don't count numbers for bragging rights, we should make every effort to encourage women to participate in the church's events.

I have a degree in journalism and public relations. In school, one of the most helpful concepts we learned was the idea of target markets. In business we ask, “Who is going to buy this product or service?” In ministry, we ask, “Who is going to benefit from this service?” By knowing whom we are trying to reach, we can customize our approach to getting them involved.

Saying that all women are different is an understatement. Not only are women in different life seasons (single, stay-at-home mothers, married—no children, empty nesters, widows), but women have grown up in drastically different generations. We are ministering to women who grew up in the Great Depression, like my mother, and women who are Gen-Xers, like my nieces. Although there's danger in blindly categorizing people, knowing general characteristics about these groups of women gives us an advantage in reaching them for Christ.

Once we have identified our target market, we can proceed with designing a multilayered, creative approach to promoting our programs.



Creating a Multilayered Approach to Promotion

Long gone are the days when you could put an announcement in your Sunday bulletin and ladies would flock to sign up for your conference. On a given Sunday morning you'll find me with bags draped over my shoulder, hands grasping colored pictures, and a brain scrambling to remember who I was going to tell what, all while I'm trying to corral three hopping, skipping boys to the car. And I'm not alone.

Make the best use of your church's promotional avenues, such as the bulletin or announcements, but don't stop there. Today's busy times call for creative approaches to reaching women. Here are some suggestions for ways you can promote the events you've worked so hard to plan:

1. **Newsletter**—I think every church should have a newsletter. It should contain information about the current month's activities, as well as upcoming events. It serves to provide as much information as possible in one place. Once it's complete, get it to all your members and have it available for visitors throughout the month. With the availability of computers and affordable desktop publishing software, anyone who can type can create a newsletter.
2. **Brochures**—Brochures can be as simple as a one-page flyer, or as complicated as an attractively designed tri-fold format. Use a brochure to include information about a single event. Answer as many questions as you can and provide a tear-off registration form if necessary. Unique paper, photos, and clip art add interest to brochures.
3. **Personal Invitations**—Everyone likes to get mail, if it's not a bill. Women especially like mail if it's hand addressed and has a pretty stamp. Gather some volunteers, serve coffee and brownies, and handwrite invitations.



4. **Use E-mail**—Communication via e-mail is growing in popularity. Working women and full-time homemakers are depending on e-mail to stay in touch. What about sending out a weekly notice of upcoming events, complete with a Scripture for the week? This is a great job for a housebound volunteer.

5. **Phone Calls**—A friendly voice on the other end of the phone brings cheer to someone feeling alone and left out. Identify women who are sporadic attendees and invite them using a personal call.

6. **Preprinted Invitations**—Having a preprinted invitation is a great way for women to invite friends who don't attend church to an event. Keep this simple and attractive. Encourage your members to keep several with them at all times, so when an opportunity presents itself, they are prepared.

Promoting Events Outside of Your Church

Local media are often willing to promote events that are open to the public. Although this takes advance planning and a little extra effort, it is an effective and free avenue to broaden your ministry outreach.

Start by making a list of newspapers and radio stations in your area that have a community calendar or a religion section. Make a phone call and record their news deadlines. Some entities need information a few days before publication, while others need several months notice. While on the phone, ask how they prefer to receive news—whether by mail, fax, or e-mail.

Armed with that information, prepare a press release that contains answers to the Five Ws—who, what, where, when, and why. It's best to write it in the simple, straightforward style of a news article, without a lot of hype, and with all five Ws answered in the first paragraph, followed by other text that expands on the basic information.



If you have a photograph that will enhance the story, send it to each publication with the release. This is especially important if your event features a well-known speaker. Photos increase your chances for publication and make the story more interesting.

Another way to reach women outside your congregation is to invite smaller churches to participate. This is a great way to minister to others who may not have organized women's ministries or the space or budget to host an event.

Preparing for Your Event

When I planned special events in the corporate world, we always took a "Do You See What I See?" walk before the big day. A group of us started at the perimeter of our property and walked the path a visitor would take. We took notes of cobwebs, dead leaves, fingerprints on windows, cluttered desks, inadequate signage, etc. We looked at our property with new eyes—trying to see what a first-time guest would see. Then, of course, we swept, cleaned, and organized.

Before your next event, gather your core leadership team and take a similar walk. You only have one chance to make a first impression, and it should be a good one. Think through the questions and concerns that might be held by a woman attending your event and address them. Being prepared allows everyone to relax and enjoy the experience once it begins.

May we never get so wrapped up in the details of planning any event that we neglect the real reasons we do what we do in women's ministry. May we always remember that we are tools in the hands of an Almighty Designer, who works through us to accomplish His purpose of drawing men and women to Himself.



Glynnis Whitwer, with Proverbs 31 Ministries, is the Senior Editor of “The P31 Woman” newsletter. Glynnis worked in public relations for many years, writing promotional materials and organizing special events. She has been a speaker, teacher, and leader in women’s ministry at her church. Glynnis has been married to Tod for nineteen years and has three sons, ages seven, nine, and eleven.

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