



TEAM

Better Together

a Team Based approach to
Women's Ministry

Written by the
National Women's
Ministry Team

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Better Together

Leadership was never designed to be a solo activity. I understand sometimes it feels easier to do things ourselves. It may seem more efficient, but it is never God's best. In fact, in the perfect Garden community, there was only one thing deemed "not good": for man to be alone, which applies to every relationship and realm (Genesis 2:18). This admonition is announced from the reference point of perfect community, the Godhead. We look up and see perfect unity yet diversity. Throughout Scripture, it always ended poorly when leaders sought to go it alone (Adam and Eve, Cain, Moses, Miriam, the Judges, and the Disciples). Moses, a leader of leaders who was called to lead one of the prickliest groups of people, also received a "not good" message. His father-in-law Jethro saw the weight and burden of his leadership and told him, "What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone" (Exodus 18:17-18).

You may be reading this, and you can relate. You feel overwhelmed by a weighty leadership calling, and deep down, you know you cannot do this task alone. This is a perfect place to begin. Look around you. Do you have other team members? I encourage you to remember to be humble because God has placed them in your life to help you carry the load and to shape you spiritually. If you are alone, begin praying t God will build His team and that it starts with you submitting to what He desires to do through a group of surrendered women who love His Church and desire to serve her.

If Jesus had a team when he did not need one, don't we, of all people, need to lean towards others in this calling? He called twelve disciples and then sent them out two by two (Mark 6:7). He inspired the wisest leader in all history to write, "Two are better than one and they have a good reward from their work" (Ecclesiastes 4:9). God is building His Church and He has providentially ordained you to be fitted next to your teammates for His glory and your good (Ephesians 4:16). He has uniquely, spiritually-gifted you as individuals who are diverse yet called to be unified around a common mission and vision to work as a body (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and 1 Peter 4).

When this supernatural collaboration happens, the world leans in and looks at what is being accomplished by your team, and we pray they declare that the Gospel is beautiful and believable. They are witnessing something only possible when God works through a team of women who are yielded and aligned to His will and empowered by His Spirit. I invite you to be profoundly shaped by serving alongside your teammates. We pray this little book is a tool He can use to encourage you that He will do great and mighty things in and through you—and He will get all the glory!

We are Better Together!

Karen Hodge

Thinking Biblically About a Team-based Approach to Women's Ministry

Many hands make light work (English proverb).

T.E.A.M. - Together Everyone Achieves More (author unknown).

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much (Helen Keller).

These statements are affirmed in team meetings and classrooms, lauded at corporate award events, and posted as social media memes. I would not disagree with them! However, in God's economy, Biblical teamwork is a much richer and a more glorious paradigm.

Team-based ministry reflects God

Since eternity past God has existed. God has always been and will always be relational, living in triune community. He lacks nothing, yet out of pure love He created us. The God-head is our reference point for relating and serving alongside our sisters. He created us with different gifts yet one purpose of glorifying Him. We are His image bearers and innately designed to need God and each other. (Genesis 1-2)

We see this communal design throughout Scripture—in the garden, the ark, and the desert. We see it in Christ's gathering and scattering of the disciples, in Antioch, and in Paul's missionary journeys. We see it in the plurality of our church leadership today. Why would we not also reflect it in Women's Ministry?

Team-based ministry is less efficient and more effectual

Wordly teams exist to meet a goal efficiently with the 'best' desired outcome. Although God's will is always done, the real beauty in Biblical teams is in the transformation of the members themselves more than in the outcome of the team. Women's ministry teams working together in view of a watching world may struggle through duplicity, differing views, scheduling conflicts, inexperience, and other stumbling blocks, but the members grow in their knowledge of and dependence upon Christ.

Biblical teams inherently create space and time for Gospel growth. Blessed bonds are created. Why? Because life happens! Sisters on teams together point each other to Christ through prayer, gentle reproof, and rich encouragement. These flow out of love for Christ's church and one another. The church is strengthened and God is glorified. (Ephesians 4:15-16)

Team-based ministry is prospective and for God's glory

Biblical teams are the vehicle for discipleship. Yes, the teams do accomplish a goal, but the journey creates life-on-life opportunities. A leader shares her gifts and graces tangibly to the next generation of leaders. The needle is moved from acquired knowledge to applied knowledge, not through notes penned by an outgoing, fatigued leader but in real-time life application that displays both the how and the why. (See Deuteronomy 6:7, 11:19; Psalm 48:13-14; Psalm 78:5-7; Psalm 145:4-5; Titus 2:1,3-5)

Further evidence for Team-based ministry

I have been blessed to participate in a team-based ministry model at my local church for years. Proof of its impact is that, in writing this piece, I instinctively looked to past and present teammates for their input. They continue to pour wisdom into me and are reflected in the above words.

Second, as a member of the team contributing to this e-book, I have a small instrument to play in the overall orchestra of writing. The contributors are from across the country in diverse roles and age brackets. I am certain that different writers will speak to each of you differently, yet the entire writing is united in Christ and his Church through CDM's team-based ministry model. To God be the Glory!

Questions to Consider:

1. What is your Women's Ministry (WM) model currently? Are all of the roles filled? Where are there gaps?
2. What are some of the obstacles you've encountered in a team model? More importantly, how can you (and your team) address these?
3. Does your WM team have a vision statement? Is it aligned with your church's vision statement? Do all members know it and apply it to their areas?
4. Who do you think the Lord is raising to be on your team?
5. How can you pray for each of your teammates? How can you specifically encourage each of them?

Janet LaRocque
PCA Women's Ministry Regional Advisor

Prayer as a Team Priority

We live in a culture that celebrates self-reliance and ingenuity, and this pressure extends into our ministry lives. We become reliant upon instant fixes to what our hearts desire, and our dependence upon the Lord diminishes. We depend upon our own wisdom and skill to accomplish the next task.

In love, God uses prayer to shape us to be patient, expectant, and others-oriented. Prayer in the Bible has a communal dimension, which reflects our interdependence. Beginning with the family of Seth in Genesis who called upon the name of the Lord, Scripture shows us that God's people pray together. In Acts we read that the early church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."¹

Prayer as a Priority

When we pray with one another, we will learn things about the Lord that we did not understand on our own. As often as we are able, we should prioritize prayer in community. C.S. Lewis, in *The Four Loves*, points out that the angels in Isaiah 6 are crying out "Holy, Holy, Holy" to one another. Each angel is communicating to the other angels the part of God's glory that they see. As we pray and praise the Lord together, we get to know Him better and deepen our delight and dependence on Him.

When we pray in community our lives and ministry agendas are pruned out of our own hands and return to the One whose glory we seek. The beginning of prayer (and truly the whole thing) is all about God. "Adoration" and "Thanksgiving" are God-oriented and heal the heart of self-centeredness. Augustine taught that one of the chief benefits of prayer is that it addresses our "disordered" loves². He believed that if we do not let God change these drivers inside of us through prayer, they would be "part of the problem, not agents of healing." When God is our greatest love and deepest delight, every other aspect of our prayer life is transformed.

Prayer Brings Perspective

Jesus' prayer that He taught His disciples demonstrated how we are changed as believers. His opening address was aimed at the heart of our disordered loves. We are taught to approach God as "Our Father."³ These two powerful words invite us to remember and reflect upon who God has revealed Himself to be and how our own identity is transformed as His children. Acknowledging God for both His nearness and His transcendence humbles us. We approach God by Jesus' goodness alone.⁴ In unmerited mercy, we draw near to God as those born into faith by the Spirit. And when we pray following the pattern that Jesus taught, we ask God to give, forgive, and deliver *us*. No longer do we seek a kingdom of our own, but our desire is for His goodness and glory to extend over every inch of creation.

¹ Acts 2:42

² Augustine, "Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount"

³ Matthew 6:9

⁴ Eph 2:18

God has not only given us fellowship with Himself, but with one another. God has not left us alone. Christ has brought you into the family of God! As those invited into the community of faith, we bear one another's burdens, rejoice with one another, mourn together, encourage one another, and admonish each other. When we lose sight of the Lord and His purposes, we neglect to pray. And when we neglect to pray in community, we lose sight of the Lord and His purposes, but as we pray together our hearts realign to seek the Lord's glory.

Questions to Consider:

1. What gets in the way of spending more time as a team adoring the Lord and thanking Him for His faithfulness?
2. How have you been encouraged by praying in community?

Meaghan May
PCA Women's Ministry Wives of Elders Ministry

Purposeful Team Planning

Ministry is complicated. Purposeful team planning creates opportunities that bring clarity and facilitate a shared understanding of ministry priorities. Vision, purpose, goals, unity, and evaluation are the key ingredients for purposeful team planning. Effective teams understand why they exist and what their job is. They have identified the impact they want to create. They plan, implement, and evaluate.

Vision

Vision is the foundation on which your plans are built. Vision guides, directs, and reminds you what is important, giving flavor to your ministry. What is your church's vision or mission statement? Be sure that your plans support this vision. Work together to develop a vision for each of the events or ministry initiatives you plan. For example, if planning an outreach event, the vision might be for your women to reflect Jesus to their neighbors and friends as they interact with them.

Purpose

The purpose is why you do what you do. Identifying the why is a helpful reminder throughout the planning process. It keeps you focused on the reason your team decided to plan a specific event. Explaining the why also creates a shared understanding of the purpose of the event.

Goals

Goals communicate the outcome you are working toward, giving direction and guidance. *Objectives* are the actions that you intend to take to meet your goals. They state what you hope to accomplish and how you know if you accomplished it. When identifying goals and objectives, you will also determine who will do what. Prayerfully consider each team member's role and what they might contribute.

Unity

Unity binds your team together. Unity among believers reflects Jesus the world. In his High Priestly prayer, Jesus prays, *I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me* (John 17:20-21). As you work together, consider unity. Are the team members unified around mission and purpose? Is this unity evident to the watching world?

Evaluate

One of the most important things you can do as a team is evaluate. Evaluation creates open, honest communication which builds unity. The true test of any good dish is hearing that people really enjoyed it. As a chef, you value the opinions of those who eat your food. Similarly, a healthy, effective team evaluation includes listening well and gauging whether you accomplished your goals.

Helpful evaluation questions are:

- Did you accomplish your purpose?
- In what ways was God glorified in the planning and implementation of this event?
- How did the event build unity?
- Was the event life-taking or life-giving?

- In what ways did this event enfold those who don't yet know Jesus? What plans are in place to engage with those outside the church?
- Who do you need to thank? How will you thank them?

As your team plans together, cultivate a culture of mutual trust and respect by spending time together and getting to know each other. Pray with and for one another. Serve one another, using your gifts to build the body. *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.* 1 Peter 4:10

One more thing, *more* meetings are not always *better*. Sometimes, an e-mail or phone call is all that is needed. When you do meet in person, clearly state your purpose for meeting and make your meetings attractive to your team. Set aside time to celebrate how God is working in and through you.

Questions to Consider:

1. What specific activities might you do to build unity within your team?
2. List the members of your team. How has God uniquely gifted each of them to build up the team? The women you are ministering to? How might understanding their giftings give you insight into what ministry events you might plan?

Cheryl Mullis
PCA Women's Ministry Regional Advisor

How to Recruit an Intergenerational Team

When I was pregnant with my second, everyone asked, “Do you want a girl this time?” The thought of having a girl made me anxious. Not only was I raised in an all-boy neighborhood, I had boy clothes, boy toys, boy parenting ideas, and we had gotten our son to age four without catastrophe. Like her brother, little did I know then that the birth of our daughter would be a continuous blessing. Walking beside her through every age allowed me to see many paths to creating an environment for intergenerational leadership in women’s ministry.

Cultivating a Titus 2 Culture

When my daughter was four, we moved to a new city where we discovered historical biblical theology at our new church. In my first Bible study, *Spiritual Mothering* by Susan Hunt, I was introduced to the Titus 2:3-5 command to women to mentor the next generation. The assignments for connecting with other generations within the body felt a bit forced, but I still did them. In hindsight, God had me practicing “hands on” intergenerational body life, often with my own daughter. Learning about God’s love, design and provision for women in His kingdom still amazes me.

That study created an awareness of how to grow a whole church culture of intergenerational ministry. For example, for many years, I helped my elder husband staff a church nursery. I realized that gathering up younger girls to serve as nursery helpers under adult women was a practical way of fulfilling Titus 2. Pairing up older women to serve with elementary girls (who were not their moms) can build strong relationships. My daughter has deep spiritual and pragmatic bonds with some of those women over 30 years later. Having this modeled allowed her generation to create similar long term covenantal relationships with those younger.

Other practices of growing a culture of intergenerational relationships might include these:

- Allowing daughters of all ages to attend church sponsored baby showers.
- Inviting middle school girls to church sponsored bridal showers.
- High school girls planning a sleepover or game night for middle school girls.
- Putting high school girls on ministry teams that prep dinners, plan women’s fellowships, etc.
- Having whole families serve at events related to the session’s vision and mission for community outreach (creating new baby baskets for Christian Resource Centers, Angel Tree Projects, etc.)

In a church climate where the Titus 2 concept of teaching and mentoring the next generation becomes the assumed culture, intergenerational leadership is a natural outgrowth. Anecdotally, once our women’s ministry began to invite high school juniors and seniors to women’s retreats, they also began to intentionally ask a high school or college age girl to serve officially on women’s ministry team. Many years later, that is still customary. But it all began with a broader vision of intergenerational fellowship and ministry spurred on from Deuteronomy 6:7, Titus 2, and a Bible study that made the women learn about God’s preferred plan and then practice outreach to another generation.

Questions to Consider:

1. How does your own covenant community encourage a climate of intergenerational ministry?
What can you add?
2. How can you make more active intergenerational leadership teams the norm?
3. How can you intentionally keep an older generation involved in leadership, women who might express, "I've done my time"?
4. What advice can you share about how to recruit multiple generations for one leadership team?

Teri Anderson
PCA Women's Ministry Trainer

Titus 2: The Biblical Recipe for Recruiting Women's Ministry Leaders

When my friend Jaime walked into a church more than 20 years ago she was an unbeliever and a single mom. Does that describe the kind of woman you would identify as a women's ministry leader? An elder's wife came up to her that Sunday and warmly welcomed Jaime into the church, encouraged her, and eventually mentored her. Jaime became a Christian and 20 years later, she is an elder's wife, has served in women's ministry in her presbytery, has been a women's ministry director at her church, and served as a regional advisor on the PCA National Women's Ministry team. The Lord worked in Jaime's life through a gospel friendship with an older woman who took the time to notice her, invite her into the life of the church, and disciple her. The Bible also tells many stories of very unlikely women that God has used to tell His story—a prostitute (Rahab), a pagan foreigner (Ruth), an unwed teenager (Mary), and many more. These are not the type of women a Fortune 500 Company would identify as likely leaders.

When I do a women's ministry training for churches, the most frequently asked question I get is, "How can I recruit new leaders for our women's ministry team?" God's recipe to create a women's ministry team has three key ingredients.

1. A Biblically Proactive Philosophy of Ministry

Women's ministry at all churches should be grounded in a proactive philosophy of ministry based on the Word and not driven by programs created by strong personalities who enjoy organizing events or planning Bible studies, but rather a ministry should be driven by the discipleship of women. In Titus 2 the Apostle Paul teaches that gender-specific discipleship relationships are based on sound doctrine because of the gospel (Titus 2:11-14)—these relationships are to be part of the warp and woof of a women's ministry.⁵ A women's ministry team should know every single woman who attends their church. How is every woman being discipled to know and glorify God and serve in your church?

2. Diamonds in the rough, not a flawless cut

"For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7b). As you think of recruiting women to serve on a women's ministry team in your church, ask the Lord to help you identify women to invest in. Look around at the women who are younger and might seem like unlikely leaders but who have humble hearts and a desire to follow Christ. Spiritual maturity takes time as the Lord works in the lives of His children—overconfident, self-assured women are not always the best fit to serve on a team. If your team knows all the women in your church you will have a pulse on who those diamonds in the rough are that you can disciple.

3. Partnering in Ministry

The third ingredient for the recipe to recruit a leader is for your team to take the women you have identified and partner in ministry *with* them. Younger women can co-lead a Bible study with a seasoned leader or can help to organize a ministry event or project with you. You should invite these younger women to visit a women's ministry team meeting so they can experience what serving on a team looks

⁵ Susan Hunt, *Titus 2 Tools* (CDM Publishing, 2016).

like. Partnering in ministry always results in new friendships as you pray with one another and serve your church together. Older women who are ministry leaders should *continually* be thinking about younger women they can invest in and disciple. God's recipe for creating a ministry team is not how we would naturally try to organize one, but His calling of unlikely women to serve always is an unexpected blessing to you and to your church.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the mission, vision, and values of your women's ministry? Write it out or share it at your women's ministry team meeting. Give a short 30-second elevator pitch that describes the essence of the women's ministry at your church.
2. Is Titus 2 an essential part of your women's ministry? In what specific ways is it woven into your ministry?
3. Write down two to three names of women in their 20s or 30s who can be partners with you in women's ministry. Or write down two or three names of spiritual daughters in your church that you currently spiritually nurture or who you could spiritually nurture. (Complete the exercise in *Breathe: The Life-giving Oxygen of the Lord's Prayer* by Karen Hodge, p. 39, CDM Publishing, 2022.)

Melanie Cogdill
PCA Women's Ministry Trainer

Unity Not Uniformity

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:1-6

Unlikely Sisterhood

Several years ago, I worked on a photography project titled “An Unlikely Sisterhood.” The focus of the project was to highlight military wives. These women come from different “hometowns” and among the women there is a variety of ethnicity, race, religion, education, etc. But the one thing they all have in common—they each fell in love with and married a Soldier. As a military spouse and part of this “unlikely sisterhood,” I am regularly amazed at the diversity and unity of the military life.

Sister, the women in your church and on your team also come from a variety of circumstances and experiences. And yet, as each is united to Christ individually, it is this very union which places her within our eternal covenant family—Christ’s church.

This is truly an “Unlikely Sisterhood.”

From an earthly perspective, this sisterhood does not have much uniformity. We come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, and sin has affected us in different way. Often, we will gather, or divide based on these earthly similarities.

Questions to Consider:

1. Write down the different types of diversity and unique qualities among the women in your church and/or on your team. Consider family of origin, gifts, talents, education, family dynamics, etc.
2. What is gained and what is lost when we gather, or divide based on earthly similarities?

Beauty of Unity Admist Diversity

Each of these differences are part of how God has made and shaped His daughters. Even the areas of suffering and brokenness are being used by God to refine the character of His daughters. Our sovereign Father brought each of these sisters to your church for His glory and for your good. These differences are intentional, diversity is not an accident.

This all sounds nice, however, living this way is hard. It can be difficult to see differences as God’s gift to your team. For instance, when you are trying to accomplish various tasks and goals, it can seem easier to have a uniform team. We may even think our women’s ministry team would be more effective without

the 'outlier'. The reality is every woman on your team is there because God has placed her there for this very time and season.

Then how do we find unity when we are often encouraged to fragment. Sisters, our unity does not come from us, our unity is not about our earthly similarities. Rather, our unity is found in the 'oneness' we read about in Ephesians 4:1-6. Our unity is heavenly - our unity is established in Christ and lived out in the context of His church.

Questions to Consider:

Consider an 'outlier' on your team or in your church. In what ways does Ephesians 4:2 speak into this relationship?

As we pursue heavenly unity, we do not disregard our sister's unique qualities, rather in humility and gentleness we come alongside each another with true love rooted in Christ. United as sisters we labor together to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Question to Consider:

Look at Ephesians 4:2, Galatians 5:22, 23 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. How do these passages connect and further expand our understanding of Heavenly Unity?

Chandra Oliver
PCA Women's Ministry Trainer

Cultivating Community On Your Leadership Team

I've noticed a recurring theme in the phone calls I get as a Regional Advisor: the team is unable to accomplish any of their goals, someone is trying to take over, or strife and conflict have caused relationships to completely break down. How can our leadership teams work together while loving and serving the church and each other well? By working on the relationships between the women on the team. We can take steps toward cultivating community by 1) remembering God's design, and 2) intentionally pursuing community.

Of course, community is God's idea and His design. God is relational by His very nature—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, existing in a loving relationship from eternity past. In addition, His good design is that our different gifts work together for the benefit of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12). We need each other! We get from others what we don't have ourselves. This is part of our working together in kingdom work.

But it's not always that simple, is it? Sinners (including those in leadership) wound each other and struggle in relationship even as we work to serve the Lord. After the Fall, things don't often work according to God's good design. But this too is part of God's plan for us. Even our conflict and strife are opportunities to repent and turn to the Lord for fresh grace. So how can we learn to love each other as we serve the Lord together?

1. Value people over your plan

Do we really take the time to get to know the women we are serving with? Or do we only care about the things that they can help us accomplish? God calls us to care about the people on our team more than our agendas or plans. We show that we value them by listening to them and praying with and for them. Be intentional about planning time to build relationships among the members of the leadership team. This isn't a waste of time—relationship building is an investment in the health of the team. Consider ways to practice the relational "one-another's" prescribed by Scripture: love one another (John 13:34); honor one another above yourselves (Romans 12:10); live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16); serve one another with love (Galatians 5:13); bear with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2); be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:32).

2. Deal with conflict well

As mentioned earlier, conflict is inevitable. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4 that we are to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, *eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" We show this eagerness when we deal lovingly and quickly with conflict. The relational capitol that we have earned by our intentional relationship-building assists in these efforts. There are two important questions to ask in this endeavor.

First, consider whether you personally have contributed or caused conflict on the team? We should lead by being the first to repent and confess our sins to one another (James 5:16). What a significant way to

display that God is working in our own hearts—by being honest about our failures to show God’s grace is sufficient even in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).

Second, how can I be a peacemaker in this particular situation? Have the principles of Matthew 18 been followed? Do I need to bring the conflict to the elders and ask for their counsel and prayers? Ask the Lord to give wisdom and direction in addressing issues that may arise. Pray that the Holy Spirit would be at work to bring the unity that displays God’s glory.

Will we always do these things well? Of course not! However, these fits and starts are part of God’s greater purpose, conforming us to the image of his Son through our relationships. Our women’s ministry team can be a place where God is glorified as we cultivate community and serve the church.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do we really take the time to get to know the women we are serving with or do we only care about the things that they can help us accomplish?
2. What are you doing to personally cultivate unity on your team?
3. Have you personally have contributed to or caused conflict on the team?
4. How can you pursue peace or reconciliation if there is a conflict?

Shea Patrick
PCA Women’s Ministry Regional Advisor

Effective Communication

Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body. Proverbs 16:24

Communication is an art and sometimes the canvas can be a beautiful blend of expression and other times an unattractive misunderstanding. I know this to be true in my own ministry experience. We long for unity in our ministry efforts as a team and yet the reality can be that as leaders, we have our own ideas and individual preferences that can take us in different directions.

How do we communicate to bring our team together and paint a picture that inspires collective thinking and planning to the glory of God? Jesus modeled a perfect example for us—He leaned in, He asked questions, He listened, He spoke lovingly and truthfully, and He shared stories that others may understand.

In an effort to cultivate your leadership team, effective communication is essential. Intentionality is the palate and these four principles the colors that can help to ensure your team is on the same page and focused on the same goals.

1. **Be Clear.** Know the mission and goals for your ministry and share them often. Give thought to how to engage your leaders in carrying out the mission of your ministry and ask them to serve in specific ways that align with their gifting.
2. **Be Concise.** Simple and short is best. This ensures that the focus of your communication is being delivered. Be sure to define exactly what you want people to understand and what you're asking them to do.
3. **Be Consistent.** Repeat with regularity. The more the message is conveyed in the same manner, the more likely it will be heard and seen.
4. **Be Considerate.** Communication is a two-way exchange. Active listening aids in affirming your leaders and getting to know them and their heart.

As you lead your team, consider how communication can build up the body by informing the minds, inspiring the hearts, and influencing the hands of the leaders God has entrusted to serve his church.

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1Thessalonians 5:11

May these principles paint a beautiful masterpiece of communication among your team, led by the Spirit!

Questions to Consider:

1. How does Jesus' example of communication inspire you in your own manner of communication?
2. What are two practical ways you can implement a principal of communication with your own leadership team?

Courtney Denton
PCA Women's Ministry Regional Advisor

How to Run an Effective Team Meeting

Directing a women's ministry meeting well begins well before the meeting. Assigning key roles to appropriate members and preparing an organized agenda will keep your meetings efficient. Is there a proper standard by which one should follow; or guidelines that need to be instated? What needs to be covered in the meeting? And lastly, is there freedom to lead organically? Regardless of your current leadership style, whether you tend to be more rigid or casual, the following components are essential to running an effective meeting.

When a Women's Ministry team is comprised of women who have a clear calling to serve Christ's Church and mature understanding of their gifts and graces, then meetings will be strategic and fruitful. Each woman on the team must also be a member of the church in good standing. If your women's ministry is just getting started, begin by gathering women who already show leadership qualities. You might consider taking your team through Life-giving Leadership. You can also invite a trainer to guide your team through a more detailed description of women's ministry.

Once you have a team assigned, or at least a coordinator designated, there needs to be an agenda to maximize your time allotted. As Patrick Lencioni says, "The majority of meetings should be discussions that lead to decisions." The agenda ensures that each topic of discussion concludes with a clear decision.

The following format provides a good foundation:

- Start on time and open with prayer.
- Review highlights from the previous meeting and wrap up any loose ends.
- Reflect upon any events that were completed since the previous meeting. Make careful notes on the pros/cons of the event. This is an important item, but you may need to limit the time spent here.
- Plan future events by doling out responsibilities. Each task should be assigned to a team member with a deadline for completion.
- Discuss the long-term dreams, visions, and hopes for the ministry.
- Ask someone to close in prayer.

Is there room for someone to lead organically? Maybe you think this is all too organized, or you fear you won't be able to find enough members to fill the roles. Do not worry friend, there is room for you too at this table! Even if your church is just getting off the ground and you want to make a place for the few women in your church to meet and fellowship together, there is value in dreaming, planning, and hoping the Lord will bless your ladies. It might be that your ladies only have the bandwidth for a Bible study and Christmas Tea. It's still a good idea to get those events on the calendar and schedule a few planning meetings throughout the year. We do not expect every women's ministry to look and operate the same. However, we are all united in seeking to encourage fellowship within the church, to inspire women to know God, to grow in understanding, and to serve the Lord. We should keep that goal in mind each time we prepare and lead our women's ministry meetings.

Questions to Consider:

1. Where are the areas in your ministry that need a little more attention? Reflection on past events? Future events? Involvement?
2. In what ways is your ministry supporting or encouraging the church?
3. Are you willing/open to changing your routines?
4. Are there ladies in your congregation that are being overlooked? How can you get them more involved?

Carrie Mills
PCA Women's Ministry Regional Advisor

Women's Ministry Teams Working with The Male Leadership

One of the great joys of ministry is working together with other leaders, casting vision, dreaming, and leading. God created man and woman in his image to carry out his purpose in the world. *I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation will reach to the ends of the earth* (Isaiah 49:6). God uses healthy, life-giving relationships between male and female leaders to build up the body of Christ and to reflect his image to the world.

Serving Together

This sounds good, right? But let's be honest. This doesn't come naturally for most of us. As humans, we struggle for control. Communication is hard. We really don't like to be misunderstood or dismissed. Our idols rear their ugly heads as we seek to find our worth and dignity in power, acceptance, and influence, rather than in Jesus. As women in leadership who desire to work with the male leadership in our churches or ministries, these idols get in the way. So how do we cultivate the kind of relationships where we can flourish and grow together? Developing these three skills is a good place to start: strengthening communication, sharing stories, and engaging in ministry together.

One of the best ways to develop healthy working relationships is to strengthen communication. Think about your current ministry context. Do you have a clear understanding of how things work? Do you know who to talk to if you have questions about ministry or the budget or bible study curriculum? If so, great! If not, here's what to do.

Initiate a meeting with your pastor and ask questions about your church's vision and mission. Find out as much as you can about how things work and who to go to if problems or questions arise. It's helpful to determine what structures or systems are in place for collaboration or advocacy.

Some questions to ask the pastor are:

- Is there an elder who will be a liaison between the session and your team?
- What ministry teams are in place, would it be helpful for you to attend Session meetings?
- What is the best way for you to communicate with the male leadership, both formally and informally?
- How might the women's ministry team support the vision and mission of the church?

Thanksgiving

Remember to affirm the pastor and other male leaders. Thank them for the many ways they lead and shepherd the church. Far too often people approach leaders with conflicts and problems, rather than gratitude and encouragement. These conflicts can suck the life out of our leaders. You can make a difference by striving to be a life-giver to the men who lead you.

Another way to build healthy, life-giving relationships is to share stories about how God is actively working in your life and the lives of the women on your team. Hearing these stories will bring hope and joy to the men, reminding them of God's purpose for His Church. Give names and specific details when

appropriate, inviting the men to both celebrate the fruit of ministry and identify opportunities for growth.

Gospel Growth

Lastly, explore places in your ministry context where men and women might engage in ministry together. How might you be a blessing to those inside the church and in the community as you reflect God's image to those you serve?

As you begin to strengthen communication, share stories, and serve together, your relationships will grow. Celebrate the small stuff. Be grateful for growth – large and small. *May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus* (Romans 15:5).

Questions to Consider:

1. Where is the best place for you to begin strengthening your relationships with the male leadership in your context: strengthening communication, sharing stories, or engaging in ministry together? Make a plan to get started.
2. What obstacles or fears come to mind when you consider strengthening these relationships?
3. What truths are important to remember as you work together?

Cheryl Mullis
PCA Women's Ministry Regional Advisor

Aligning Your Women's Ministry with Your Church's Mission and Vision

Several years ago, I took a job as the women's ministry director at a church. I walked into a ministry that had gone through years of transition, and I was given an opportunity to not only learn the culture and get to know the women, but also to do a reset of what our women's ministry would look like. I gathered a team of women from all seasons of life (an advisory board) from the church to work together to come up with the direction of our women's ministry.

His Will and Wisdom

First, we prayed. We asked God to reveal His will. We asked for wisdom and insight as He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep, and He loves our women more than we ever could. We asked God to show us what to let go of and what to keep. And we kept praying through the process.

Second, we evaluated the past. What was currently working well and what was not. Who were our people and what were their needs? What were our strengths, growth opportunities, threats, and weaknesses?

Third, we discussed what our women's ministry should be. What was God calling us to as women in the church? The rest of this e-book will speak to that question, so I will not address that here. What we discovered on this journey was that our vision and mission should be the same as the church. We are not called to do our own thing as we are part of the body of Christ. We are members of Christ's church and our vision and mission is the same. What we realized is that we are interconnected with all the other ministries, and as we minister to women, we partner with the rest of the church to make mature and equipped followers of Jesus.

Alignment of Mission and Vision

The best place to begin is to align your women's ministry with the vision and mission of your church.

Our mission statement is the same as our church's mission statement. I have used the analogy of the church as a big arrow—all the ministries of the church are working together to accomplish the vision and mission (the point of the arrow), and we are working alongside other ministries to accomplish that vision. We spent time thinking about the unique seasons and opportunities and ministries that help women grow in their faith so we could lean into those things.—We spent weeks deconstructing the ministry and evaluating it before deciding our vision, and I am a little embarrassed to say it took me a lot of that time to realize that we were not on our own. It is actually a gift to not be on our own. We would be limited if it was just us helping women to mature in their faith. The church has many members, and women's ministry is a strategic part, but it is not the whole. As Director of women's ministry, my call was not only to make a ministry plan to accomplish the church's vision, but also to tailor that vision and mission around the unique needs of women. Some of the needs included thinking for various seasons of life (singles, moms, empty-nesters, widows), care needs, Bible studies, discipleship and events.

As you are setting the direction or reevaluating your women's ministry step back and look at the big picture. Remember as you are planning, be praying for wisdom and direction to lead you in how to accomplish that vision and mission in the lives of the women under your care.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you know the vision and mission of your church? What is it?
2. How would your ministry planning be different if you started with the church's vision first? What might change if you started there?
3. How could your women's ministry be stronger by collaborating with your church overall?

Jamie Voss
PCA Women's Ministry Regional Advisor

Women's Ministry Teams Working with Other Ministries in the Church

I once attended a church that had an unusual design for their women's ministry. The ministry was completely separate from the church. It had its own separate bank account. The session was not involved in any way in oversight of the activities and programs that the women's ministry had. The women's ministry functioned as a completely separate organization from the church.

Clearly, this model is not the best way for a women's ministry team to function. Just as God designed all the parts of the human body to work together for life and function, he has also designed his body, the local church, to work that way as well. As 1 Corinthians 12 tells us, God has "arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'" The Church, God's visible people here on earth, is designed to work together to accomplish his purposes. So how can the women's ministry team best work alongside other ministries in the church?

1. Focus on your purpose.

The Session is charged by the Lord with implementing the concrete ways to accomplish the work that God has for a particular church body. Hopefully, your church Session has thought through and spelled out the mission, vision, and values of the church. A healthy and productive women's ministry functions not with their own set of mission, vision, and values, but in a way that supports the mission, vision, and values of the church. The women's ministry should seek the guidance and input of the session in what tasks and programs that it should coordinate for the care and growth of the women of the body. Unlike the example church that I mentioned in the beginning where the women's ministry was blazing a path on its own, the women's ministry functions best as it supports and implements the purposes set down by the session of the Church. Ideally, the Session will be purposeful in praying for and leading the women of the women's ministry team. The Session will provide oversight for each of the ministries of the church, unifying all the different aspects of the body around the purposes and goals as set out by the session. This provides unity of purpose for all the different ministries of the church.

What I have described here is the best-case scenario for a women's ministry. But if the Session has not developed a clear mission, visions, and values for the church, you could ask where the Session sees the women's ministry helping with the overall mission of the church. Great unification comes from all the ministries of the church working to implement the same vision and values as laid out by the Session.

2. Communicate, communicate, communicate.

Make sure that the leaders of the women's ministry are in frequent communication with the other ministries of the church. The activities and programs should be calendared around the activities that other ministries have. In fact, think of ways to get other ministries involved in the programs that the women's ministry host. For example, if your church has an ESL ministry (English as Second Language), make sure to invite the women that participate in that ministry to your events. Coordinate with your hospitality team to get their assistance when the women's ministry has events. Ask your children's ministries the best way to handle childcare for women who attend Bible studies. The different parts of the body work best and reflect God's glory when they work together as he designed.

3. Participate and encourage.

Consider the women's ministry as an important part of the work that the Church is doing. But don't neglect participation in other ministry activities. Show your support for other activities by showing up and being involved. There cannot be any talk about cliques and division when ministries of the church are championing and supporting each other.

And this is God's good design! Just like we need all parts of our body healthy and functioning, the parts of our local church, God's visible body here on earth, should be working together toward one common goal – the glory of God and the bringing of his kingdom here on earth.

Questions to Consider:

1. Consider ways that your women's ministry is supporting the mission, values, and vision as laid out by the session of the church. Are there things to celebrate? Is there room for improvement in this area?
2. What are some of the ways that the women's ministry team can support communication among the ministries of the church?
3. What are some tangible ways that the women's ministry team can work with and encourage the other ministries of the church?

Shea Patrick
PCA Women's Ministry Regional Advisor

Gracious Leadership Transfer

Every four years the world is united around the Olympic games. One of the most moving and memorable moments is the opening ceremony, especially the part where the Olympic torch is lit to symbolize the start of the games. Usually, a celebrity or special person is chosen to run the flame into the arena and light the torch but that person is not the one who got the flame there. He or she ran the last leg of the race, but it took many more people (sometimes as many as 8,000!) to get the flame from Greece to the new host city. The ceremony is big and there is much fanfare, but the countless people who made it happen are probably nowhere to be seen. The idea is not to celebrate the people who helped light the huge torch but to celebrate what the torch represents.

Passing the Torch

We can use this picture to help us think about our women's ministry. Think of the big torch as the God's glory, shining bright for all to see. And we are the runners carrying the flame along to its intended destination. Thinking we can carry our women's ministry flame to display the torch of God's glory alone is much like a runner saying she can singlehandedly run from Olympia, Greece to Paris, France to light the torch in 2024. It is impossible! And also, it was not intended to be this way. The picture of the flame passing from one person to another is part of the idea behind the Olympics—people joining together in a spirit of unity. If our world can give us such a memorable picture of this, we as Christian women can and should give an even better picture.

God's Glory

But how do we do that? First, we need to remember that everything we are doing should be with the goal of God being glorified (1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:23). Getting this first step right will help to take the focus off ourselves and will therefore encourage us to want others to join us. Working for God's glory is such a treat, we would never want to keep it to ourselves and we also want to build a ministry that will last once we are gone. Lord willing, your church and its women's ministry will still be shining for the glory of God long after you are no longer in charge.

Raising Next Generation Leaders

Second, we need to have women to bring alongside us in our work. Scripture is full of references to teaching the next generation about the glory of God in order to strengthen God's people (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 1 Timothy 4:11-15, Titus 2:1-5). If you look around and see women who have been following in your footsteps, thank the Lord and begin to intentionally pour into them: teach them, train them, encourage them. Remember, your goal is to pass the flame on to them so they can continue to run the race because it is too long for one person to do alone. If you look around and see no one coming along behind you, stop and pray. Ask the Lord to show you women you can invest in. Prayers for wisdom and help in our time of need will be faithfully answered (James 1:5-8, Hebrews 4:15-16). You could also ask wise gospel friends and your elders for names women they know who you could disciple. God has a good plan for your church and your women's ministry. He is currently using you to accomplish His mission and He will provide the next generation of women to carry the torch of His Glory.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some things that are keeping me from working solely for God's glory?
2. How am I intentionally teaching and training the women who are coming behind me to prepare them to run this race?

Marcie Tuten
PCA Women's Ministry Regional Advisor

Team-Based Model for Women's Ministry

Goal of Team-Based Women's Ministry: A Strong Church

Here is an example of a women's ministry structure whose chief aim is to strengthen the entire church. As older women (spiritually and perhaps chronologically) serve alongside and disciple younger women, this will prayerfully yield mature Christian women who are life-giving servant leaders. Leadership development at its heart is Titus 2 discipleship. Team meetings and service should always orientate around a Word-based and relationally-driven philosophy of women's ministry. They should consider using training material such as *Life-giving Leadership*, *Spiritual Mothering*, or *Women's Ministry in the Local Church* as a core curriculum to train and equip the leaders as a part of their meetings. The team is to be an epicenter of Gospel culture making in a church. The church's overall women's ministry will be an overflow of the team Gospel culture. It holds within it the potential to spread life-giving or life-taking culture throughout women of the church. This model is comprehensive and integrated in nature. Note the arrows that flow downward as this team serves under the authority and blessing of their Session. Note the horizontal arrows, as the team is designed to work collaboratively and cohesively. Diverse women, gifts, and functions, yet united in Christ under the mission and vision of their church.

Ministry Areas

Here you see listed examples of what is generally needed to strengthen a church through women's ministry. Prayer, equipping, in-reach, outreach, and communication are ministry focus ideas. Each church should work with the male leadership to identify the potential areas of service that will strengthen their church. Teams should feel the freedom to adapt this model from year to year. The mission statement and tasks that flow from them should all be aligned with the mission and vision of their church. The team should be a complementary size to the church's size and needs.

Co-leaders:

Ideally, these women are identified by the male leadership of the church. They serve for two to three years. In the first year, the older (spiritually and perhaps chronologically) woman co-leader in each area takes the lead, and the younger woman is serving alongside and is being trained and disciplined. In the second year, the younger woman takes the lead, and the older woman serves in a supporting and encouraging role. As Solomon reminds us, "two are better than one" (Ecclesiastes 4:9). Throughout both years of their terms, these women may be building subcommittees in these ministry areas where proven and potential leaders begin to emerge. They work with the Session of their church to help identify potential leaders to replace them in the third year, where there is a season of training and equipping to prepare the new co-leaders. This model aims to provide a pathway to encourage and equip all the women of their church to serve. It helps to avoid the pitfalls of personality or positional-based leadership because there is built into the structure a culture for healthy leadership transfer.

