

# The Gift of Togetherness...So Important for Women's Ministry!

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Remember the popular TV show "Cheers"? It was a bar scene where regulars would come daily to sit and chat. Ever wonder what drew them there? The lyrics to the theme song tell us the drawing card: "Making your way in the world today takes everything you've got. Taking a break from all your worries sure would help a lot. Wouldn't you like to get away? Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came. You wanna be where you can see, our troubles are all the same. You wanna be where everybody knows your name."

Chuck Swindoll says: "The neighborhood bar is possibly the best counterfeit there is to the fellowship Christ wants to give His Church. It's an imitation, dispensing liquor instead of grace, escape rather than reality. But it is a permissive, accepting, and inclusive fellowship. The bar flourishes not because most people are alcoholics, but because God has put into the human heart the desire to know and be known, to love, and be loved, and so many seek a counterfeit at the price of a few beers."

My burden is this: as women's ministry leaders, are we aware of this lack of connection, though we are rooted and grounded in Christ? Over the last year, most of the churches in which I have spoken or done leadership consultation have asked me address this very issue. How can we help the women in our church to connect with one another?

Through technology, busyness, and self-centeredness, we are losing personal touch with one another. Our world, while offering opportunities for forming merely surface relationships, is leaving little time for cultivating deeper connections in Christ.

God created us for community. God has given us what I often call "The Gift of Togetherness" to meet this need. Scripture teaches us that we are fellow workers, helpers, labourers, prisoners, sufferers, etc. The word "fellow" means this: "together with, implying a nearer and closer connection, a more intimate relationship as Jesus Christ has with us. This is more than the word "meta" which means "amid or among, merely in company with." This word for fellow, sun, is used 127 times in the NT, telling us how we are to be closely connected. I think of us as being "sun sisters".

So, I believe the need will be answered only when we as women's leaders intentionally institute methods, programs, and plans that promote this "Gift of Togetherness". How can we do that in the coming year?

1. Recognize and address the need of our women to be accepted and connected as a women's ministry team. Make your women at large aware of this inborn need.

2. Assess where your women are in your fellowship. Which best describes the relationships of your women. Are they “fellows” or merely “amid” one another.

3. Is the opportunity being afforded for them to truly connect with one another? Or do they merely meet, greet, eat, and depart in the same manner they came.

Intentionality will be the key to meeting this need in your women’s lives.

Because I teach a large ladies class that schedule only affords 1 hour a week for cultivating close connections, the leaders in my class formed 4 small groups, inviting them into my home for food and fellowship. Our goal was to make each woman feel accepted and connected. It worked well. Used the same menu, same table talk questions, and centered our group discussion on [Hebrews 10:24](#).

Our Women’s ministry team is piloting a program that will connect older women and younger women, by using [Woman to Woman Mentoring](#) and [Apples of Gold](#) resources.

Accountability opportunities are opening up for women to form small accountability groups, using Heart Friends resource.

A sister church is beginning a series of small gatherings in individual homes, entitling it “The Bridge”, for the purpose of connecting with each other in preparation for connecting with the world. I held a training session beforehand for the leaders on “Telling God’s Story Your Way”. Then a different leader was asked to begin each “Bridge” gathering by sharing her story.

Hebrews 10:24 encourages us to “consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Until we are closely connected in the body of Christ, we will never bring those outside into the fold though their hearts experience the same need as ours: to love and be loved, to be accepted and connected.

Ladies, let us make sure that our assembling this next year includes appropriating our “Gift of Togetherness”! Tell us in the comments below what you are doing to create community for your women, a place where "everybody knows their name".