

Top Ways to UnWelcome Women



Is there room in your small groups for one more? Of course, we want to believe we're all friendly and welcoming to everyone, but take an honest look at what others might see. It's great to *say* we welcome anyone into our groups; it's another to live it out.

Unspoken rules. The longer your group meets, the more assumptions you'll make that everyone knows the details of where and when the group meets, who to contact with questions, and what you're studying. As you promote the group, have someone who isn't involved read through any communication to anticipate questions others might have. Consider unspoken expectations, such as payment for study materials, refreshments, changes in schedule, and more. Go through guidelines each time a new study begins.

Language barriers. You might catch yourself saying such things as "We're so glad you've joined us" or "We hope you'll visit us again." These are polite comments, but we create barriers when we use *us* and *them* words. Avoid putting newcomers in the hot seat. Have everyone in the room introduce themselves to the group instead of just the new women. They need to get to know you too!

Comfort zones. Getting to know the same group of women helps us feel comfortable and safe, and it's difficult to let others inside that safety zone. Sadly, some women are hostile to inviting anyone new to get involved in a group. The longer someone sits in a comfort zone, the more jarring it is to offer her seat to someone else. Create a culture where women look for opportunities to connect with and welcome other women. After all, where would you be if someone hadn't welcomed you?

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