

Suggestions on How to Minister to Women

Women make up half the world's population

Women are the majority in most Christian churches

Women are a majority of the Adventist Church membership

Women want to be treated as Jesus treated women: with acceptance, respect and dignity. They want to be included and treated as persons of worth, created perfect by God, and for whom Christ died. As Adventists, we are called to restore all people to the pre-fall condition; we find this in the Sabbath and marriage sanctity (Genesis 1:27 - 31; Gal. 3:28). Women want to be part of the mission of the Church, fully involved in ministry in all its forms.

Those working with women need to understand that women do have special needs. By meeting these needs, we are doing as Christ did. *Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with [people] as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."* --Ministry of Healing, p. 143.

Some of the most critical issues that face women world-wide are:

- Illiteracy
- Abuse
- Health risks
- Poverty
- Workload/hours
- Lack of mentoring and leadership training

When preaching, giving Bible studies, or other presentations, use as many examples of women from the Bible as possible and how God dealt with these women. Think about the illustrations and examples used, the language used, the songs that are sung. Do they include women too, or do they just talk about men? Be inclusive of men and women, old and young, rich and poor, all races, and people in your audience.

As soon as possible, help to train women in leadership and for personal witness. It is important that the pastor, church board, and especially the Women's Ministries leadership, understand the purpose of Women's Ministries. It is not the only place in the church for women to be involved. It is, however, the church department to do *specific* ministries *for* women and to train and equip women to do a wide variety of ministries—ministries that can best be accomplished by women. The purpose of Women's Ministries is not to just do a weekly or monthly program, but to be sure that every woman in the congregation knows and has an opportunity to use her spiritual gifts.

To successfully minister to women, you must also minister to men. You must help the men understand how a Christian man treats a woman. You must teach how a husband treats his wife and daughter, with courtesy, respect, and kindness. There must be no violence or abuse, physically, verbally or psychologically. God abhors violence (Ps. 11:5; Is. 60:18, Rom. 12:1-3). One cannot assume new or even members who have been in the church for many years know this. It must be intentionally addressed and included in sermons

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and other educational opportunities.

Statements from Ellen White such as these can be helpful in ministering to the whole family:

... The Lord desires His people to give in their homes a representation of the order and harmony that pervade the heavenly courts. Counsels on Health, p. 101.

Let them remember that the home on earth is to be a symbol of and a preparation for the home in heaven. Ministry of Healing, p. 363.

Home should be made all that the word implies. It should be a little heaven upon earth, a place where the affections are cultivated instead of being studiously repressed. Our happiness depends upon this cultivation of love, sympathy, and true courtesy to one another. Adventist Home, p. 15.

Here are some things you can do to minister to women and enrich the ministry of the local church by involving women:

- Survey the women to whom you are wanting to minister. Find out what they feel their most pressing needs are.
- Involve the women themselves as much as possible in any decisions that include or involve them. Women generally think and process information differently than do men. When they are included, better decisions are possible. This will strengthen the work of the church at all levels.
- In Bible study groups or other informal meetings, allow women an opportunity to share and visit. Personal relationships are very important to most women.
- When women (and men) are brought into the church, pair the woman with a more mature Christian woman for mentoring and sisterhood (Titus 2:3-5). Women can and should be trained and involved in discipling new members. Depending on the culture and circumstances, women can also disciple men, perhaps more easily than men can disciple women.
- When planning events that involve women, take into consideration the many hours of work they already face as well as the need for child care so that they can attend and enjoy the event.
- Study and learn for yourself what the Bible, and particularly Paul, really teaches about women. Don't let people get away with only half the message.

We as a church face a monumental task:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:”

There is work enough for each and everyone of us. We need everyone, working together, sharing and showing God's great love.