

Beyond Typical: Creating an Externally Focused Women's Ministry Innovation³ Conference, Dallas, TX Jan 27-28, 2009

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Wendy Ferrin, Salem Alliance Church, Salem, OR (www.salemalliance.org)

Pastor of Women's Ministries

Our women's ministry is based on the team model. Leadership teams meet once a week, headed by 12 deeply mature, deeply committed women. I coach them and they run the ministry.

The model has 10 teams, similar to the Bible Study Fellowship structure. It was already in place when I arrived in the job. Our 4 core values are worship, groups, service and outreach. Our 10 teams include Missions, Administrative, Retreat, Hearts and Homes. Our holiday dinners and the Hearts and Homes are our two biggest outreaches.

What is the biggest challenge with the model?

Innovation and infrastructure: You can drown in administrative need. You have to have a good infrastructure. You need job descriptions for every level.

What's the best way for a church to encourage its women to use their gifts in leadership?

We encourage women to take the Discovery class, discover their gifts, find their sweet spot, and launch them into that sweet spot of ministry.

I don't use the word *volunteer* because they are called by God and they're *leaders*.

If you could leave us with one thing, what would it be?

Develop your team. You can't do it by yourself.

Claudia McGuire, Chase Oaks Church, Richardson, TX (www.chaseoaks.org)

Women's Ministry Pastor and Connections Pastor

Our women's ministry model aligns with our whole church: small groups, getting people connected to God, people and needs. My goal is seeing each woman in the church as a woman in ministry, and helping her to be all God has created her to be. It's about connecting her to areas of service that are already there.

What is the philosophy behind having Bible study only once per month?

We used to have 15 diff. bible studies, two hours each. After evaluation we decided to make it easier to commit to. I want to teach them to study the word on their own, not me feeding them.

What was hard about making the shift to the Simple Church model?

Cutting down the women's ministry to the essentials of what God wanted us to do. Strong fellowship patterns blocked connections outside the body. They didn't want to change. We had to take a strong women's ministry and change it from being all about us, to about those outside our church building.

What's the one thing you would say to us?

Begin to see all the women in your church as being women in ministry, not women's ministry. Challenge your women to reach out.

Sybil Towner, Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, IL (www.willowcreek.org)

Director of Spiritual Mentoring

Spiritual mentoring is the aspect of listening: learning to listen to someone without trying to fix, control, advise or manipulate them.

It is listening to your own story, another's story, and listening to God, the practice of spiritual discipline.

We offer a series of 6 retreats on the 6 disciplines of Silence, Solitude, Prayer, Scripture, Spiritual friendship and Self-Examination.

Tell us about Listen to My Life.

- It is a process that helps a woman answer the question, What is my passion?
- First, listen to your life now. What do I want to do with my life? Is there something more?
- It asks questions that get to the heart of inner issues. Unresolved issues from childhood can surface in crucial questions. Age 1-6: Am I loved? Age 6-12: What can I do? Adolescence: Who am I? The questions can resurface at every future stage in life.
- We use journaling to mark recurring patterns. God does the work of healing and restoration. He wants to restore and reframe.

How do you process your story so that the deepest work occurs?

- Forgiveness, processing valley experiences and getting in touch with desires and longings. The purpose is for realizing how blessed you are, so that you can be a blessing.
- We do the work of detaching from all the things we have attached to, to attach to the One who is the Lover of our soul.
- You begin to see where the work of God is moving in your life, and you begin to fan it into flame. Learning to listen to the voice of God in your own life.
- Stories free us from the lies we have been told and that we have told ourselves. Meaningful freedom is not freedom *from* something, but *to* something.