

KELLY D. KING

ESSENTIALS

# MINISTRY TO WOMEN

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE  
FOR LEADING WOMEN IN  
THE LOCAL CHURCH



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WOMEN IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kelly D. King is the Women's Ministry Specialist for LifeWay Christian Resources where she coordinates training and equipping events for women in leadership. She holds a Master of Theology degree from Gateway Seminary and was an adjunct professor at Oklahoma Baptist University while serving as the Women's Specialist for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma for eleven years. She served as the Women's Ministry Director at Council Road Baptist in Bethany, Oklahoma, and currently leads the women's ministry as a volunteer at Green Hill Church in Mount Juliet, Tennessee.

She and her husband, Vic, have been married thirty years and have served together in ministry, both teaching students and young adults. They have two young adult children, Conner and Courtney, and a son-in-love, Gaige. They enjoy kayaking, having people in their home, and cheering for the Oklahoma Sooners. Kelly is a fan of Tex-Mex and coconut milk mocha macchiatos, but not at the same time.

## INTRODUCTION

I have a pretty good idea you picked up this book looking for answers. And I have a pretty good idea you desire to be equipped in your calling to minister to women. Maybe it's been a gentle nudge from the Lord that won't go away. Maybe you were recruited to lead women in your church. Maybe you felt a little coerced and someone handed you this book in hopes it would be of help. Maybe you've even said the phrase I've heard many times—"I'm not even sure I like women!" Whatever the case, I'm hoping you see yourself as a servant leader, called by the Lord. I'm hoping you're excited about this adventure called ministry to women.

Perhaps you aren't a new leader. Maybe you've ministered to women for years, and you're thinking, *Do I need another book on ministry to women?* If that's a question you're asking, let me assure you the answer is yes. Women's ministry, or ministry to women, is constantly evolving in the local church. The *why* of ministering to women hasn't changed. The biblical mandate is found in Titus 2—the mother passage of all women's ministry:

**In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God's word will not be slandered.**

TITUS 2:3-5

Yes, women are instructed to teach younger women and to live worthy of their calling. But the calling to ministry is found in the basic instructions of the Greatest Commandment and the Great Commission. Every Christ follower is called to love the Lord God with all her heart, soul, and mind and love others as herself—the Greatest Commandment. Every Christ follower is called to make disciples who make disciples—the Great Commission. Your calling isn't narrow or easy. Your calling is challenging, global, and full of eternal consequences.

Though our calling is the same as it was for the early church, our methods in the twenty-first century are completely different. In the past ten years, there have been seismic shifts in our Western culture and even in ministry. Part of this may be attributed to the rise of the largest generation to emerge on the scene yet—the



Millennial generation—those born somewhere between 1980 and 2000. Part of the shift is due to the exponential changes in communication—social media, video, and the various ways we interact. We have transitioned to a digital age. Women want rapid and practical applications to learn from God's Word.

Because we live in a digital age, people are struggling more and more with work and life balance. Ministry needs to have flexibility—options and availability for today's woman. In other words, a Bible study offered once a week during the day just isn't going to cut it in our current climate. We, as a society, value collaboration more than ever, which means working in teams carries significant implications. Teams will work collaboratively because one individual doesn't have all the information. We will all learn from each other.

We have shifted from a modern culture to a post-modern culture. No longer does our culture have an inherently biblical worldview or a view of God and the church. In fact, many people seem to go through life without an understanding of who God is or a desire for any type of religion. We call these the "nones"—the number of Americans who do not identify with any religion. According to Pew Research, "one-fifth of the U.S. public—and a third of adults under 30—are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever recorded in Pew Research Center polling."<sup>1</sup> We've seen another shift in the rise of women in higher education. In 2006, *The New York Times* reported only 42 percent of college students were male, as compared to 58 percent women. Women are now outpacing men in graduation rates and grade performance.<sup>2</sup> Leadership, in general, has changed. No longer do you see positional leadership, but ministry leaders who manage through influence. Ministry leaders in today's culture guide as coaches, not directors or bosses.

Finally, part of the shift may be attributed to the rise of interest among women as leaders—both in the church and in the marketplace. In a world where female leaders were once few and far between, they are now celebrated and given expanding opportunities to make a difference in the marketplace and in our ministries. The daily news often focuses on issues relating to women—both positive and negative. Whether the issues focus on women's marches, sexual harassment in the workplace, inequality of pay, or myriad issues relating to women, there are lots of opinions that impact the need and emphasis for churches to provide biblical answers and ministry for women.

Let's be clear up front, this book is not a comprehensive resource—it's not meant to be. It's not an encyclopedia or theological dissertation on the roles of women in the church. It's the "essentials"—the things we deem most necessary to include when developing a ministry to women in the local church. The word *essential* is defined as, "basic, indispensable, necessary."<sup>3</sup> In this small book you will find several lists and bullet points to help you think through next steps. They are meant to be practical with simple how-tos and best practices you can easily apply. Each local congregation is different, and there is no one-size-fits-all handbook that will work for every church. So whether you are a church of one hundred or one thousand, a church serving in a rural area or an urban area, a church that is traditional or contemporary (or both), consider this to be a resource that focuses on the broad strokes and not the details, a tool you must adapt to your unique situation. Customize the ideas you read in the following pages to fit your context. Highlight the main things you want to do, and strike through things that don't line up with the direction you are headed. I'm excited you have allowed me the opportunity to speak into your calling. I believe it's a great time to be a woman and a leader in the local church. Whether you are leading a Bible study, planning an event, directing a non-profit, or planning strategic mission initiatives, women are vital to the success of local church ministry.

Women—we need you. The church needs you—both the global church and the local church. And while this isn't the end-all book for your leadership journey, my desire is that it will provide some basic answers to your questions and give you direction as you follow the Lord's calling to minister to women. I'm cheering you on as you pursue God's mission.





# START WITH WHY: PRAYER AND PURPOSE

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In 2009, Simon Sinek released his book, *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*. His TEDx Talk®, based on the book, has more than 39 million views, the third most popular TED Talk ever watched to date. Sinek's simple premise: every inspired leader begins with the question of *why* and not *how* or *what*.<sup>1</sup> Your ministry to women must begin with that same question. It's not just a matter of how to start a ministry to women in your local church but a matter of why God gives us a biblical mandate to reach women, disciple them, and encourage them to start the cycle again. When you define the *why*, your ministry begins with purpose. But it also must begin with prayer.

If I were to ask you who the greatest leader in the Bible is, I hope you would use the standard Jesus answer. He knew His mission. He knew His purpose, and He carried it out. But let's consider other great leaders in the Bible. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt—no easy task. Peter, along with the other apostles and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, led the early church even in the midst of great persecution. There is no question that their *why* was Jesus' instruction to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. I could go on and on with a list of great leaders, but there is one cupbearer to the king who always captures my attention in regard to his focus on purpose and prayer. His name was Nehemiah.

The first chapter of the Book of Nehemiah is the Simon Sinek chapter of Scripture, although I'm not convinced Sinek includes the foundation of prayer in his thesis. Instead, in Nehemiah, we find a dedicated servant who had a relentless burden to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem that had been destroyed by the Babylonians.



Nehemiah's burden and holy discontent wasn't just about a physical wall that would protect Israel from her enemies. It was a spiritual concern for a nation who continued to adopt the religious practices and culture of surrounding ungodly nations. Instead of God's people shaping culture, the culture was shaping them. Sound familiar?

As you consider the spiritual needs of women in your church, ask yourself these questions:

- **DO I HAVE A BURDEN FOR THE WOMEN IN MY CHURCH?** Do I go to church and see women who have a need to connect with God's Word and with each other? Am I aware of the number of women who sit alone in a pew every Sunday morning desiring to connect with others in their pursuit to learn more about the Lord? Do I have a burden for women who walk through the doors of my church who are hurting and broken? Do I seek to develop relationships with women of all ages and stages of life?
- **DO I CARE ABOUT LOST WOMEN IN MY COMMUNITY?** Do I consider the lostness in my community and pray for those who need a relationship with Christ? Am I actively having conversations with women who are far from God? Do I see culture shaping the lives of women in my community or does God's eternal and infallible Scripture shape them and the way they live?
- **ARE MY CONCERNS BASED ON BUILDING SOMETHING THAT WILL BRING RECOGNITION TO ME OR GLORY TO GOD?** Do I seek a position within the church, or am I more concerned with serving the Lord? Am I willing to serve without pay or a title? Eric Geiger, former senior vice president of LifeWay Christian Resources, once said, "The idolatry of ministry is when I'm more concerned about what God is doing through me than what God has already done for me."<sup>2</sup>
- **DOES MY CONCERN FOR WOMEN IN MY CHURCH KEEP ME UP AT NIGHT?** Do I care more about the transformation of women through the gospel than I care about adding a program to the church calendar?

If these questions resonate with you, be encouraged. More than likely, God has placed a holy discontent in your heart to start a ministry to women. So where do you start? Here are some simple steps to help you develop a why for your ministry.

### **BEGIN WITH PRAYER.**

Just as Nehemiah began with prayer, take time to seek the Lord for direction. Nehemiah understood God's character (Neh. 1:4-7), was acquainted with God's promises (vv. 8-9), and had seen God's practices (vv. 10-11). Include a small group of women who share your burden. Pray together. Pray for wisdom. Don't overcomplicate it—just pray and seek the Lord.

### **MEET WITH THOSE IN AUTHORITY.**

As Nehemiah met with King Artaxerxes in Nehemiah 2, consider those with whom you need to meet. Most importantly, connect with your senior pastor or the staff person whose responsibility includes discipleship. Share your burden and seek their input and support. Consider how your vision lines up with the overall mission of your church and explain how your women's ministry will only enhance what is currently happening.

### **ASSESS THE NEEDS OF WOMEN IN YOUR CHURCH AND EXAMINE THE MINISTRIES THAT ARE ALREADY HAPPENING.**

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he strategically took a few men with him to examine the walls. He assessed the situation before he started rebuilding. I recently watched the 2016 movie, "The Founder." It's based on the story of Ray Kroc and his pursuit to change the fast-food industry by taking over a small and successful restaurant named McDonald's®. While Kroc's leadership style isn't one to emulate, the film captures Kroc's introduction to the McDonald brothers' new way of making hamburgers. After years of being in the food business, the McDonald brothers took careful consideration as to the process of food delivery. They "rebuilt the wall" of the food industry, streamlined production, introduced disposable wrappers, and sought a better way to do business.



In the same way, it's time to evaluate and assess the hows of your ministry. Ask yourself (and like Nehemiah, include a few others) these questions:

How would you describe your current ministry?

How would other women in your church describe your current ministry?

If you could describe what you want your ministry to be, what would it look like?

What obstacles stand in your way?

What things are currently working well? How can you build on those?

What's not working well? What needs to change, and how will you get there?

## BUILDING BLOCKS FOR YOUR MINISTRY FROM NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah developed a strategic plan for rebuilding the wall. He understood the importance of gathering a team and delegating responsibilities, but he also developed a strategic plan.

NEHEMIAH 1–2	Ministry begins with prayer, purpose, and permission.
NEHEMIAH 2	Ministry needs vision but also execution.
NEHEMIAH 3	Ministry involves several people.
NEHEMIAH 4	Have an understanding that ministry often encounters opposition, and people get weary.
NEHEMIAH 5	Ministry may come with injustice and call for courage, but perseverance is necessary.
NEHEMIAH 6:15-16	Ministry should celebrate success and give God the glory.

## DEVELOPING A PLAN

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Vision is the art of seeing things invisible.<sup>3</sup>  
—Jonathan Swift

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For years, I have used a simple formula to develop purpose in ministering to women. I use three words that begin with the letter E. It's just "easier" for me.



## ENCOURAGE

I believe ministering to women begins when we build courage into one another. Encouragement is infusing hope or courage into another's life. In the early church, people were sent to encourage believers in their new faith, to spur them on to be strong in the midst of persecution. First Thessalonians says,

**Therefore encourage one another and build  
each other up as you are already doing.**

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:11**

I don't know about you, but I think every woman needs encouragement. Whether they need encouragement in their relationships, in their work, or in the midst of their struggles, one of the most important aspects of ministering to women must be your desire to encourage them.

Drew Dudley delivered another one of my favorite TED Talks® entitled, "Everyday Leadership" in 2010. While you might be drawn to the title on leadership, his illustration of a lollipop was the "sticky" point of his presentation for me. He shares how the simple act of giving a young woman a lollipop and encouraging her through humor changed the trajectory of her life—and he didn't even remember the incident.<sup>4</sup>

Dudley says we've made leadership into something bigger than us, something beyond us. We've made it about changing the world and doing things that only a few people can accomplish, yet leaders are people who do things every day to encourage others.

## EMBRACE

Whether you embrace someone in affection or you adopt an idea, there is a sense of intimacy and ownership. Your ministry should offer ways to help women seek Jesus Christ through His Word and through a personal relationship with Him. As a believer, you not only believe the doctrinal truths of repentance and salvation, but you draw close to God in an intimate relationship. He communicates through His written Word, and we cry out to Him through prayer. Our embrace of God should be so tight that we identify the Holy Spirit as the One who dwells within us.

Paul said in Acts 19,

**Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?  
Did you take God into your mind only, or did you also  
embrace him with your heart? Did he get inside you?**

**ACTS 19:2, THE MESSAGE**

## ECHO

I adopted this idea from a former women's leader who helped shape my thoughts of ministry. Women should embrace Christ, and in return they should echo His heart for the world. We accomplish this through the disciplines of sharing our faith and living on mission with God. Christian women must be obedient to pray for the lost and be radically involved in reaching the nations as well as our next-door neighbors. Our spiritual lives must create an echo that affects a much larger world than we will see. Just as an echo repeats a sound, we must repeat the teachings of Jesus through our daily actions. First Thessalonians 1 says,

**Your lives are echoing the Master's Word, not  
only in the provinces but all over the place. The news  
of your faith in God is out. We don't even have to say  
anything anymore—you're the message! People come up  
and tell us how you received us with open arms, how you  
deserted the dead idols of your old life so you could  
embrace and serve God, the true God.**

**1 THESSALONIANS 1:8-9, THE MESSAGE**

You, too, must develop a plan for reaching women. Like Nehemiah, you might encounter opposition. You may grow weary in the process. But, if you persevere and seek the Lord's direction, you can develop a ministry that brings women to Christ and glory to God.

My desire is for the following pages to provide some new insight, new ideas, and new vision that you may implement in your local church ministry. These chapters are meant to encourage you on this incredible journey of ministering to women—not to make your name famous, but to make the Lord's name famous.

Let's get started.

