

Women's Ministries is about more than just monthly meetings, special programs, and a social network for women in the church. Certainly, it can provide all those things, but Women's Ministries is so much more. It's all about what the name says—ministry.

What image does the word *ministry* create in your mind? A picture of the pastor standing behind the pulpit on Sabbath morning? Ministry is so much more than pastoral ministry, important though that is. The goal of Women's Ministries is to help every woman in the church discover and develop her own ministry.

Perhaps you're saying, "Me? A ministry? I don't have a ministry!"

Maybe you have a ministry, though you don't call it by that name. Or maybe you're waiting to discover your ministry. Perhaps it's more accurate to say that God has a ministry for every woman. Your job—with the help of resources like your Women's Ministries department—is to discover what that ministry is and learn how to develop it.

First we need to define our terms. What exactly are we talking about when we talk about "a ministry?"



A Ministry for Every Woman



Department of Women's Ministries
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 USA
301-680-6608
womensministries@gc.adventist.org
<http://wm.gc.adventist.org>

What is a “Ministry”?

The term “ministry” is tossed around a lot in Christian circles, but sometimes we’re a little vague on what it actually means. Here’s one great definition of what “ministry” means:

Ministry takes place when divine resources meet human needs through loving channels to the glory of God.

(W.W. Wiersbke, On Being a Servant of God)

Ministry is what happens when God’s love for people is channeled through your unique gifts and talents to meet the needs of people. That means there are three elements needed for ministry:

- God’s desires
- Your gifts and abilities
- Other people’s needs

Let’s explore how each of these elements contributes to the goal of discovering your unique ministry.

What God Wants

This is the one part of the equation that’s not variable. We know what God’s desires are, what He wishes to see accomplished, because the Bible tells us.

We can see God’s desires for this world by looking at what He did when He came to earth Himself in the person of Jesus. Jesus spent His time on earth healing, helping, showing compassion, and sharing the message of God’s love and His coming kingdom. And He made it clear that God wants His people to continue that same work.

We know, then, that God’s desire is to see the hungry fed, the homeless sheltered, the hurting helped, and

everyone transformed by the Good News of His love and His soon return to earth.

What We Have to Offer

The next step in figuring out your ministry is understand what you have to offer—what your unique gifts, abilities, and interests are. For some women, this is the difficult part. Low self-esteem and mistaken teachings about humility have conditioned us to say, “Oh, I couldn’t possibly—I’m no good at that!” As women, especially, we tend to focus on our deficiencies instead of our strengths.

The Bible points out over and over that God gives His people spiritual gifts to help them in doing His work in this world. Some of these gifts are listed in Romans 12, 1 Cor ??, and ???????. Most churches can help you find resource material, books, and seminars to help you learn what your spiritual gifts are.

Sometimes God gives us gifts to work in areas we’d never imagined possible—it’s always best to be open to the unexpected when dealing with God! But most of the time, our spiritual gifts match well with our natural talents and abilities. Take some time to think about your work skills, the hobbies you enjoy, the activities you’ve been involved in that have given you pleasure and a sense of competence. Start thinking about how these skills can be used to accomplish God’s objectives.

What People Need

When you’ve begun to think how your gifts can be used to meet God’s goals, look around at your community and see what the needs are. Is there a gap in your church or in your community that’s not

being filled? Is there an existing ministry in need of volunteers that matches your gifts? Is there an individual who needs what you have to offer?

God’s desires; your gifts; the needs of people around you. Put the pieces together, and you have a formula for ministry.

What Does Ministry Look Like?

Let’s look at some examples of how that formula might work in practice.

- ◆ You love cooking, home-making and playing hostess. Your Women’s Ministries department needs someone to host meetings and get-togethers at home, so that becomes your ministry.
- ◆ You have a gift for working with young children; your congregation needs special program for children during the worship service. You can share God’s love with children and parents by planning a Children’s Church program.
- ◆ You’re good at listening and helping people find direction in their spiritual lives. You develop a ministry of spending time with several women you know who need help discovering God’s will for their lives.
- ◆ You like sharing what you’ve learned from God’s word and you are comfortable speaking in front or leading a small group. Your church needs Bible study leaders and your Women’s Ministries department needs a speaker for a special function, so you are able to serve God by meeting those needs.

Begin the adventure of discovering your ministry for God today!