

Developing Outreach Eyes in Women's Ministries



by Linda Hardin
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What does it mean for women to have an active, vibrant, effective ministry to others? The answer is as diverse as the women comprising Women's Ministries. Each has special gifts, talents, and abilities. Check out the following three examples.

MaryAnne is an elementary school teacher. Some of the parents of her students do not speak English. She stays long after others have left to tutor some of the parents. Other days finds her arriving early to help them complete job applications and other forms. As relationships between tutor and student develop, MaryAnne becomes aware of special needs and works to resolve them. During the Christmas season, she used the Christian symbols as a means of expanding their vocabulary. Was MaryAnne involved in ministry? Yes! Has anyone attended church or accept Christ? Not yet, but that's MaryAnne's prayer.

Cindy lives in a growing development. As new neighbors settle in, Cindy delivers sandwiches on

moving day. After a few days to allow for unpacking, Cindy visits again with cookies or pie to welcome them to the neighborhood. She offers information about grocery stores, malls, schools, and so on—especially if the neighbors are new to the city. As the days grow into weeks and months, Cindy continues to look for opportunities to visit and build relationships. One of Cindy's goals is to invite the new neighbors to a cookout so

everyone in the households can be introduced. Ministry? Yes! Has Cindy said anything about Christianity? Not yet—but she continues

to pray and watch for opportunities.

Laura spends every Sunday afternoon at church. She walks the aisle, picking up discarded papers, replacing cards, sharpening pencils, and straightening hymnals and pew Bibles. Not too many know how Laura spends her Sunday afternoons. Most don't even consider that someone had to prepare the sanctuary for the evening service. Is Laura involved in ministry? Yes!

Ministry includes a variety of methods of building relationships to connect those outside the church to those inside.

Ask the finance committee about the savings in custodial costs because Laura volunteers her time.

Hopefully, you're getting the picture! Ministry happens outside the walls of the church building. Ministry includes a variety of methods of building relationships to connect those outside the church to those inside. Sometimes ministry involves the extraordinary. But most times ministry is very ordinary.

One of the goals of Women's Ministries is to encourage women as they minister to people through everyday life. We need to publicly recognize their ministry and challenge others to develop outreach eyes and see their interests as opportunities.

Paul writes, *I have been all things to all sorts of people that by every possible means I might win some to God. I do this for the sake of the gospel* (1 Cor. 9:22-23, Phillips).

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