



REAL WOMEN!

Friendship

R. E. A. L.
Women!
R. elevant
E. ncouraging
A. live
● L. ionhearted

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Old friends, new friends. Always room for one more! When I was a young girl I belonged to Brownies. We had to learn the "Brownie song". "Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold". Old friends are wonderful. Old friends bring the treasure of shared memories and history together, the "remember when" type of memories. New friends are wonderful. They are part of the "unknown". What will develop? What has God in store for this relationship? They are a treasure buried treasure waiting to be discovered.

Friendship can be defined as a relationship that consists of mutual knowledge, esteem and affection. Growing up as an avid reader many of the stories I read had to do with two girls who were "best friends". In grade school there was much competition to who was your "best friend." This progressed to junior high and high school where friendships seemed to be based on the "ins and the outs". Somehow the joy of friendship was negated by the insecurities of the developing teenager's psyche.

This false assumption that the best and finest state was to have "one best friend" was difficult to overthrow. Where was that "soul mate"? Where

was she hiding, and why couldn't I be "good enough" to find her? Slowly through that swampy time of life, without a "best friend" God came into my life. He became my confidant. He became my best friend, a friend who would never leave me or forsake me. Wandering into the woods behind our childhood home, I would climb into a fallen tree and simply share my soul. He was my Friend, and continues to be so. By learning from Him about friendship, I have become a better friend

Psalm 27:9 *The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense*

As I have matured, I recognize that God has designed each of us to need human friends as well. However, I no longer believe there is one friend who is able to meet every need. By widening the definition of "friendship" I have enlarged and enhanced my world tremendously. By allowing the Holy Spirit to bring His connections into my life has brought many varied and life giving relationships. As an insecure and immature teen most of my "friends" were based on what they

added to MY life. It was mostly about me.

Allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal His plan and purpose for each relationship has removed most of the fear factors so I don't look through the filter of "suppose they hurt me?" "Can I trust them?" I find myself trusting Him and believing that His purpose will override and cover any hurt received or given on my side. I have learned that becoming a godly friend means walking in maturity. Quickly applying the tools of forgiveness, understanding and mercy has helped me maintain precious long term relationships. My friends, I am sure, have had to apply those tools on their side as well!

Why do we need friends? Remember God's declaration in the Garden of Eden? "It is not good for man to be alone?" God intended for people to work together, share together and serve Him together. Psalm 27:9 *The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense.* Walking through this life alone is not good. We must trust the truth of Amos 3: 9 *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him*



My Sisters exemplify Friendship with mutual knowledge, esteem and affection

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up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.

Let's get honest. Many times in ministry you may find people who let you down. Those who seem to misunderstand everything you do and there are some who have to deal with "friends" who seem to be like a Judas. If this happens, count it joy, for you have entered into the sufferings of Christ. He understands and will bring comfort, wisdom and healing to those disillusioned parts.

But this does not negate the fact that you need relationships. I am so thankful for my friends

who have listened, prayed and helped me through some deep waters. God sent them into my life and if I had been too guarded, afraid and disconnected I would not have had the blessing of their sweet perfume in my life. Proverbs 25:11-13 from the Message Bible states: *The right word at the right time is like a custom-made piece of jewelry, And a wise friend's timely reprimand is like a gold ring slipped on your finger. Reliable friends who do what they say are like cool drinks in sweltering heat—refreshing.*

We will be exploring the topic of friendship in the November issue. It has many different facets. May the Friend of sinners and saints come into your life now and strengthen you in every portion of your being.

May His grace touch each of you, my friend. If you need a friend, I am available. I am not perfect, but I am growing! There are some very lonely ladies who struggle in this area. My heart cry is that you never need to feel alone in the midst of your struggles, your troubles or your joys! We are here for you. Give us a call or an email. Please remember we pray for you!

Written by:
 Martha Rodman

Statement of Faith:

We are becoming Relevant, Encouragers who are Alive to God and His Spirit, even to the point of Being Lion-Hearted!

THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP

If your bad habit screams, "Me First,"
 . . . Break it.
 If your spirit cries with thirst,
 . . . Slake it.
 If for company you yearn
 And someone else's trust you earn,
 When friendship's offered in return,
 . . . Take it!
 Just place your hand in his or hers;
 . . . Grip it.
 If imagined slight occurs,
 . . . Skip it.
 See what's needed, then give more.
 And if a weed springs up, before
 It chokes the path to your friend's door,
 . . . Snip it!
 If gratitude or praise is due,
 . . . Heap it.
 If a secret's shared with you,
 . . . Keep it.
 When a seed has taken root,
 Beside your friend stand resolute,
 And when the full-grown tree
 bears fruit,
 . . . Reap it!

~Mary Sullivan Georgetown, TX, USA



Leadership Encouragement

WHY YOUR VOLUNTEERS WON'T VOLUNTEER

Do people really prefer not getting involved? Staying disengaged? Here are some of the most common perspectives and excuses given for why volunteers won't!

There aren't any jobs that I can do.

After hearing all the dissertations on doing things well with a spirit of excellence, they examine their own skills and talents and find themselves fearful that they would disappoint the leadership with their abilities.

These people need to know that there is training available and that they would NOT be placed outside their area of gifting. Asking them to "shadow" a person already doing the job may help boost their confidence level.

I filled out a time and talent sheet, but nobody called me.

Again, left feeling there either is not a place for them specifically or they do not have the skills required. If you are asking people to fill out a form, use it!

Frustration from previous volunteering.

Finishing a job frustrated can prevent people from volunteering again. If they did not feel they had adequate training for the job, the job description was changed mid-stream or that expectations were not clearly defined can lead to much frustration. Take time to "interview" the volunteer, clearly sharing the expectations and job skills needed to perform the task. This means that you must have these things clear before you

begin gathering volunteers.

They hated the job!

Sometimes it was simply a bad fit. Sometimes the job got "dumped" on the volunteer because no one else wanted to do it. No given authority to do the job, so those under them didn't respond. No training or resources given, simply "here, do it". No one likes to have things "dumped" on them.

No one seemed to care for my ideas or me.

Taking the time to listen to the volunteer communicates respect and caring. A person who feels respected will do a better job. A new worker may have the blessing of "strangers eyes" and you will actually gain some good helpful changes. We must value the people before the job we want them to do.

I don't have the time.

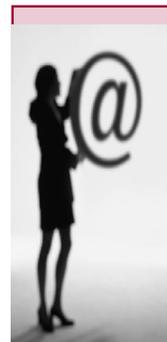
People make time for what they value. If you keep getting the response "I don't have the time for it", they may be covering up for one of the other reasons listed. They may not see the priority or advantage for them to do it.

You don't know them well enough to know their strengths.

Taking the time to get to know the people you are asking to volunteer will help in finding out their strengths, interests and likes. People enjoy working with their

strengths, not their weaknesses. They want to be used where they can have success, not failure.

Volunteer Management actually comes with a "theory". You must first plan for what you want them to do. Make it clear. And then recruit, including a time for orientation and training. Make sure the leadership has a plan to supervise and evaluate the progress, and then comes the all important "pay check" the time of recognition. Making sure that each time you ask for volunteers you keep these steps in mind will help promote your ministry, making your project even more successful.



Real Women! is available in email format.

Send your email address to martha@impart.org

Requesting the email version.

If you have friends who you would like to share Real Women with, feel free to send their email address as well, or you could simply forward it to them when you receive your copy!



Building Together Across Generations

Bridging Across Generations Exercise

An invitation to share with a group of ladies from All the World Christian Center in Grants Pass led to this fun, revealing and connecting exercise. God gave me this idea briefly during a time of prayer for this specific meeting, but it can be adapted for a variety of settings

Set Up:

First I read Ephesians 4:2,3 in the Amplified Bible. 2 *[Living as becomes you] with complete lowliness of mind (humility) and meekness (unselfishness, gentleness, mildness), with patience, bearing with one another and making allowances because you love one another.* 3 *Be eager and strive earnestly to guard and keep the harmony and oneness of [and produced by] the Spirit in the binding power of peace.*

I also read Proverbs 24:3 *Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established.*

I pointed out that the more we understand each other the better the house of the Lord is established. Learning see from another's point of view helps all of us "make allowances and love one another".

I then divided the women into three different groups, based on their "season" of life. The first group was those who were single, the second those who were married with children at home, and finally married with adult children. (If the specific make up of the group lent itself to four groupings, it would have been better. I would have separated the younger single women from the older ones.) Each of these groups was separated to different areas of the room.

Each group was handed a piece of paper and pen and asked to choose one member who would be the scribe to write the responses. They were given 5 minutes to discuss and list their top five life issues they faced as women of their particular season group.

(As monitor I wanted them to stay on the task and hoped the time limit would help them do so.)

After the five or so minutes were up, I asked them to turn their papers over and write the top five issues of the other groups. (Groans and moans emanated!) Another 5 minutes or so passed.

We then re-assembled in one large group. Using a white board with a different dry erase marker color for each group we then asked each group to list their top five issues.

It was interesting to watch the women's faces as they began to share. The members of the other groups would wonder if they had gotten it "right or wrong". I kept telling them, there is no right or wrong. The goal is for us to begin to understand those who are different than ourselves in a better way. Again I emphasized Proverbs 24:3 *by understanding will the house be established.*

Then using the same color marker as I had for each group, I wrote down their list of perceived issues from each group for each group. That was probably the most enlightening. Some were funny, some were quite right on, and some seemed to miss the mark. However, with grace, love and laughter they all seemed to grasp the need to enlarge their understanding of the issues facing their sisters. One gal in particular was able to share the difficulty of having an older parent with health issues and how stressful and time consuming it was to help him.

We closed in prayer for each group. God moved and touched their hearts and lives. It was a precious time.

Here is a special follow up e-mailed to us by Kim Simmons, the lovely pastor's wife: *Grandma Kay told the church on Wednesday evening that the ladies' meeting was so good and everyone was treated as very important, even a 93 year old lady. "Every one is important to God." Ladies also commented again that they have a new understanding and appreciation for each other. "We are different, yet the same."*

®.E.A.L.
Women

Real

Relevant

Righteous

Risk-takers

You are important to us.

Share your ideas, thoughts or suggestions.

martha@impart.org