

RELATIONSHIPS

When it comes to relationships countless dollars have been invested, volumes have been written and hours of counseling have been spent. Why? Because we are designed for relationships.

Notice I didn't say we "want" relationships. The need for relationships for basic human development was highlighted by renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow as being superseded only by physiological needs (food, water, clothing, warmth), and safety needs such as shelter. If you've lived on this earth for any amount of time, you understand the plethora of relationships that human beings pursue. But for now, let's focus on women's relationships. The best mission field for a women's ministry is to fulfill the relationship need among other women.

My dear friend "Dee" recently asked our ladies' group to join her in prayer for her friend, an atheist, who had expressed interest in accompanying her to a Bible study. As Dee humbly discounted her own influence on her friend's curiosity about Christianity, it came out that all Dee had done was to be a friend in a difficult time. That's it. Are you hearing this, ladies? I could hardly restrain my tears as I praised God in my heart and marveled at how He, through this sweet and simple relationship, began softening a heart, even in the midst of its denial. By the way, I'm going to ask you to pray, too. Is anything impossible for Him?

What about the young single mother with a rocky past who has cautiously darkened your church door for the first time, or for the first time in a long time? She may be taking a step to fulfill an innate need in her life. Will you do your part to help fulfill that need or will you safely keep your distance? What a wonderful opportunity to be called her friend as she seeks to begin or renew her relationship with the Savior!

Does your relationship with other women really make a difference? Ruth, a Moabite woman, was from a land of idols. Scripture makes it clear that Ruth chose not to return to her homeland after her husband's death, and through her relationship with Naomi, her mother-in-law, made the choice to serve God. Generations later, God's plan was fulfilled through Ruth's descendants in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Most of us aren't just really superb at initiating relationships, are we? For some of us, a strange antisocial fear strikes at the thought of basic introductions - even in our own church! I've been there and I truly understand. **For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7** Let this promise assure us that we are adequately equipped. Fear is not a player in a game when such high stakes are involved.

Resolve to make new efforts to build relationships. Purposefully ask God to place people in your path who need Him. Then, seek His guidance on how best to connect. Whether it's the cranky clerk at the grocery store whose line you try to avoid, the sassy student who is just asking to be sent to the office, the backstabbing coworker (there, I said it), the first-time church visitor, or the unbelieving daughter-in-law, let's love them where they are. Ask God to use every encouraging text, lunch date, Facebook friend request, card, Bible study invitation, small gift, or listening ear to draw them. Yes, they need a relationship with us, but most of all they need a saving relationship with Him.