

Biblical Philosophy of Women's Discipleship Ministry

Bethany Baptist Church

	Scripture: <i>Believe It!</i>	Biblical Principle: <i>Think It!</i>	Methods: <i>Practice It!</i>
Women: A Vital Part of the Church Body	<p>Romans 16:1-16 <i>Phebe, Priscilla, Mary, etc.</i></p> <p>2 Timothy 1:5 ...<i>I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice.</i></p> <p>1 Peter 3:7 ...<i>heirs with you of the grace of life.</i></p> <p>Acts 1:14, 5:14, 8:12, 9:36, 16:14-15, 17:4, 18:2</p>	<p>Women are an integral part of the church. According to Scripture, women are not inferior to men, but have an equal standing in their relationship with God through the righteousness of Christ. In the early church, women received salvation, were baptized, took an active part in the ministry of the church (such as in prayer and giving), evangelized the lost, mentored younger believers, suffered persecution for their faith, and ministered to the practical needs of the body. Usefulness is not defined by age or marital status. All are vital to the body of Christ!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be attentive to spiritual giftedness in our members and provide opportunities for them to exercise their gifts in the body. (Networking with those already involved; regular emails to our ladies with current needs/opportunities; ministry packet for new members; etc.) • Preaching/teaching that addresses a biblical worldview about God's roles and redemptive purposes for the various life-circumstances, marital status, and genders within our church body. • Intentionally teach and encourage our women to develop a disciplined and consistent prayer life. Email the weekly prayer list/urgent prayer requests to raise awareness of each other's needs. • Challenge our women to be active in children's ministry, one-on-one discipleship, etc. Provide opportunities for training/mentoring. • Equip our women to build healthy discipleship and redemptive relationships.

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Submission to God's Authority Structure	<p>Genesis 1:27 <i>So God created man in his own image...male and female he created them.</i></p> <p>1 Corinthians 11:3 <i>But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.</i></p> <p>1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 <i>...be in submission.</i></p> <p>Ephesians 5:22-33 (Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6) <i>Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord...Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.</i></p> <p>1 Timothy 2:11-15 <i>Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.</i></p>	<p>Throughout Scripture, in both the Old and New Testaments, God clearly reveals His authority structure for both the Christian family and the church. Man has been given authority over the woman, and God specifically commands women not to usurp this authority (1 Tim. 2:11-15). Scripture also expressly forbids women from holding the office of pastor or deacon and from exercising a teaching or preaching ministry to men (1 Tim. 2:12, 3:2; Tit. 1:5-6). Women are repeatedly commanded to submit to male headship in the church as well as to their own husbands. This authority structure is not degrading to women. Rather, it establishes an orderly rule for the smooth operation of these institutions and provides protection and security for women. God is the Author of this order, and we believe His plan is both wise and good.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our women's ministry will not function independently from the authority of our Pastors and Deacons. All major ministry decisions must first be considered and approved by them. • Women will not be permitted to teach men. • Women are permitted and will be strongly encouraged to exercise their teaching gifts within the body through K4T, Primary Class, Wednesday Children's Bible Study, Sunday School classes, and Ladies' Bible Study. • Preaching/teaching on Biblical Womanhood and Manhood, submission to authority and God's created order for the home and the church. As this position is totally counter-cultural, we will not assume that all women in our congregation know and cheerfully submit to these truths. • Provide marriage and family counseling through our local church. • Each year we will ask our Pastors and Deacons for direction on our Ladies' Bible Study.

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Women's Ministry Complementing the Goals of the Church	<p>Ephesians 4:1-16 <i>...Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.</i></p> <p>Romans 12:3-8 1 Corinthians 12:4-31</p> <p><i>Examples of complimentary ministry:</i> Acts 9:36-43 Acts 16:14-15, 40 Romans 16:1-16</p>	<p>The driving mission of the church is to bring glory to God by equipping believers to worship God, edify the body, and evangelize the lost. Women's ministry must never distract from this main mission by competing for members' attention and involvement. Rather, women's ministry must compliment these goals, seeking to assist the church in fulfilling its ministry mandates.</p> <p>The main purpose of women's ministry, therefore, is not to provide social activities, programs, or fellowship—though none of these are wrong in their proper setting. Instead, women's ministry must be primarily focused in helping believing women know God and do His will and helping unbelieving women come into a right relationship with God. This focus demands that the Bible be at the center of whatever we do in women's ministry. Therefore, even in our fellowship times (i.e., showers ladies' events, etc.), we will intentionally use each opportunity we are together to be in the Word of God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Women's Ministry will seek to constantly be the <i>servant</i> to our church, asking how we can help further the goals of Bethany and carry out the direction and vision of our church leadership. • Direction received from pastoral leadership when choosing a Ladies' Bible study—<i>what will best compliment the current needs/emphasis of the church?</i> • As we are intentionally not program-driven, we will limit extra activities/events that require large amounts of time and resources that compete with other church ministries and/or home responsibilities. Time and resources will be primarily devoted to people. • With the focus on "<i>who</i>" instead of "<i>what</i>," we will seek to facilitate ways for our women to reach out into the community. • We will provide specific opportunities for our women to study the Bible together such as: Ladies' Small Group Bible Studies, Sunday School, one-on-one discipleship, and periodic ladies' retreats. In planning these interactive study times, we will consider the best resources for teaching our women to become Word-filled believers. • When planning Ladies' events, the coordinators will seek to complement the goals of our church and run decisions through the grid of this written philosophy.

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Teaching and Modeling Godly Feminine Character	<p>Titus 2:3-15; 3:1-8 <i>Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.</i></p> <p>1 Timothy 2:9-10 <i>Likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.</i></p> <p>Ephesians 4:1-6 Ephesians 5:26-27 Philippians 4:2-3 1 Timothy 3:11 2 Peter 3:10-18</p>	<p>The quality of a church is determined by the quality of its members. Both Timothy and Titus provide clear instruction about the lifestyle and character our Lord expects from women who make a profession of godliness. Union with Christ results in Christlikeness. The ultimate goal of this godly testimony: God’s honor and glory.</p> <p>We believe that these gospel expectations should be clearly taught in our women’s ministry, modeled by our female lay leadership, and honored in our congregation. We desire to use every possible means to aid all our ladies in the forming of godly feminine character.</p> <p>Along with biblical principles relating specifically to women, our instruction should also include other areas of instruction regarding sanctification and personal holiness. Our women must learn how to practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and discipleship so that they can continue to grow in grace, pursuing Christian maturity and deepening their knowledge of Christ.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train our people in the <i>how to</i> of one-on-one discipleship. Provide the tools, structure and accountability to facilitate a vibrant discipleship ministry at Bethany Baptist Church. Main teaching and equipping for this will be done by the Pastoral Staff (i.e., public teaching of the Word from the pulpit, <i>The Vine Project</i> small groups). • Organize Ladies’ Small Group Bible Studies to facilitate accountability, mentoring, specific teaching on biblical womanhood, and intentional involvement in the lives of our ladies’ for their spiritual good. • Organize these small groups to intentionally include a variety of ages and life-circumstances to foster cross-generational relationships and opportunities for mature believers to develop discipling relationships with those younger in the faith. • Considering our limited resources, carefully guard the amount of time devoted to programs and events. Events planned during the year must be considered in light of how much time they will take away from cultivating relationships with the lost and discipling believers (i.e., Will the gain be worth the investment?).

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Discipleship and Biblical Soul Care	<p>Titus 2:3-5 <i>Older women...train the young women...</i></p> <p>Galatians 6:1-2 <i>Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.</i></p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5:14 <i>And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.</i></p> <p>James 5:16 <i>Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.</i></p> <p>James 5:19-20 <i>My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.</i></p> <p>Matthew 28:19-20</p>	<p>One of the main results of spiritual maturity is involvement in the lives of others for their spiritual good. Scripture clearly mandates the discipling and mentoring of believers by those more mature in the faith. Christ is our supreme example of personal involvement in the lives of others for their spiritual benefit. He spent three years training, mentoring, instructing, correcting, and growing His chosen disciples. He prepared them to be useful in His kingdom. The apostle Paul also exemplifies this model of ministry through his constant involvement in the lives of younger men whom he groomed for service in God's kingdom. Paul mentors Timothy so that he in turn can teach others the truth of God's Word. Paul commands Titus to teach the older women in his church how to live righteous lives so that they are able to instruct the younger women in the church how to live in a manner that befits their profession of godliness. This is one of the most important ways that the church carries out its mission to get the Word of God into the lives of its members. Discipleship and biblical soul care, whether in a formal or informal setting, should be standard practice for all believers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scripture teaches that discipleship, one Christian's involvement in another Christian's life for their spiritual good, is not an option. The Bible commands this type of interaction to be taking place within the body of Christ—it is a gospel expectation—the outflow of God's grace in the lives of those who are united to Christ. Our Women's Discipleship Ministry is a step of obedience for Bethany as we seek to please the Lord by providing opportunities for our spiritually mature older women to coach others in the art of godly living. • Actively look for ways to develop long-term relationships within the body. Teach on the importance of this interaction in each other's lives. Provide opportunities for people to connect with one-another (Summer Sunday Night Gatherings, small-group fellowships, etc.). Cultivate an awareness of visitors; teach the congregation how to interact with and engage visitors. • Look for ways to integrate various age groups to develop a cross-generational ministry (i.e., teen girls, young women, older women). Such as: Adult ABS classes, intentional mixing of Care Team Groups, etc.

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Teaching Truth and Promoting a Biblical Worldview	<p>Colossians 1:27-29 <i>Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.</i></p> <p>Romans 12:1-2 <i>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.</i></p> <p>1 Thessalonians 2:11-13 <i>We exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.</i></p> <p>2 Timothy 3:15-17 <i>... the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.</i></p>	<p>Much of the New Testament was written to correct false doctrine. The early church leaders had a deep burden to see believers stand firm in true doctrine. Scripture teaches that right doctrine will result in godly living and effective evangelism.</p> <p>Scriptural views of marriage, the family, and godly femininity are under continual attack in our culture. Secular media has an intentional agenda to oppose God through the pervasive teaching of anti-Christian views at all levels of society. As Paul and Peter sought to counter the evil influences of their godless culture through the preaching and teaching of God's Word, we desire to counter our culture's influence with the absolute truth of Scripture. We must be deliberate in both warning against and correcting false doctrine.</p> <p>Because of our conviction in the absolute authority of God's Word, and our trust that it alone has the power to change the heart, we will maintain a primary emphasis on teaching, reading, studying, and modeling the Word; with a special emphasis on godly femininity, God's design for marriage, raising a family, modesty, and sexual purity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally and passionately teach God's truth to the women in our church, with a special focus on godly femininity and the biblical role of women. We desire our women, of all ages and backgrounds, to learn and apply the principles of biblical womanhood in their personal lives, in our church, and in our community. Feminists have saturated our culture with their doctrine; we want to be even more deliberate in presenting God's message to the women in our congregation! • Teach our women how to study the Bible and practically apply it to their lives. • Train our women how to talk to people graciously and winsomely—both outside the body of Christ and with other Christians—about marriage, family, modesty, submission, femininity, etc. We desire our women to speak as skillfully, boldly, and articulately as the feminists who decry and distort the order God established.

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Mercy Ministries (Care of Widows, Hospitality, Benevolence)	<p>Romans 12:13 <i>Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.</i></p> <p>James 1:27 <i>Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.</i></p> <p>1Peter 4:9-10 <i>Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.</i></p> <p>Matthew 25:35-40 Acts 16:14-15, 40 1Timothy 5:1-15 Hebrews 13:1-3 Hebrews 13:16 James 2:14-17</p> <p>See also: Exodus 22:22 Deuteronomy 14:28, 29 Psalms 68:5 Jeremiah 7:6, 7 Jeremiah 22:16</p>	<p>Throughout the Old Testament God visits His children when they are in distress. He comes near, concerns Himself with their need, and provides what is necessary for their relief. Believers are likewise commanded to visit the widow and the orphan in their affliction. In so doing, we model the love and gracious care of our Creator to the watching world. Though care is to be first administered through the remaining family, the church should also provide spiritual and physical help as needed.</p> <p>Darryl Champlain, a veteran missionary to Africa, describes agape love as “love with shoes on.” This kind of love is active in meeting needs in the lives of others, not only those who are within the body of Christ, but also those who have never experienced saving grace. Jesus made it clear that we cannot claim to love the Lord with all our hearts unless we also are active in loving our neighbors. The love of Christ is clearly demonstrated through the good deeds of his children. As God’s children sacrifice to help others who are in need, the watching world will have undeniable evidence of the love of God towards them. Our words of love have little ring of truth in them, until we evidence the love of Christ in our actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a healthy Benevolence Fund. • Deacon oversight of the widows/widowers in our congregation. • Operate an efficient Meal Ministry through the ladies in our church family. Meal teams ready to provide for needs within the congregation. Refresh meal teams as needed to include new members. • Encourage ministry to those hurting in our communities through opportunities to help at places such as The Center for Women, The Oaks, The Sharing House, Safe’s Attic, etc. • Provide opportunities for our church families to host Missionaries. • Provide opportunities for our members to use their homes for church ministries: Care Teams, Summer Sunday Night Gatherings, Youth Group SNACs, College and Career fellowships, Ladies’ Small Groups, etc. • Regularly update the congregation about needs within our church family – mainly through Wednesday night prayer meeting and e-mail prayer sheets.

Bethany's Mission Statement:
*To glorify God by equipping our members to worship God,
 edify the body, and evangelize the lost.*

Ministry of the Word

Pulpit Ministry:
Public preaching of the Word
 Sunday morning
 Sunday night
 Wednesday night

Small Group Ministry:
Small group study of the Word
 Adults, Teens and Children

Individual Ministry:
Private ministry of the Word

Adult opportunities:
 Adult Bible Study Classes
 Winter Bible Study
 "Bethany 101"
 Ladies' Bible Study Groups
 Men's prayer breakfasts
 Discipleship training classes
 Mission trips
 Care Team Groups

Teen opportunities:
 Teen Sunday School
 Wednesday Youth Meeting
 Youth Activities
 Mission Trips

Child opportunities:
 Sunday School Classes
 Kids4Truth
 Wed. Night Classes
 Nursery/Primary Class
 Bethany Christian School

Discipleship Ministry:
 One-on-one interaction

Men
 Discipling
 Men

Women
 Discipling
 Women

Counseling
 Ministry

Redemptive Relationships

Mature believers
 mentoring
 new believers

Speak Truth. Believe Truth. Live Truth.

