

Espresso

Your Monthly *Women's Ministry Planner*

September 2011

Heart Spa

by Amy Nappa

Summer is traditionally the time for vacation...and summer is over. Do you feel rested? Like you got that peaceful vacation from the busyness of life? I don't! I used my vacation days to go on fun-packed outings with family and friends and to do yard work and other around-the-house projects. Not exactly peaceful, tranquil, or otherwise calming!

I know my body needs rest. Even though I don't take days off to relax, I do manage to sneak in a nap or two on the weekends. And I try to take a break during the day at work, stepping outside for a short walk to help my brain refocus. But it's still hard to truly slow down.

Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God!" Be still. I'm annoyed at this verse. This isn't a great passage for a multi-tasker. I would rather it said, "Know that I am God while you're leading a meeting, texting your husband, and thinking about what to have for lunch." But God does know best. Be still.

As women's ministry leaders, we have so many demands on our time. We already have all the pressures that every woman has, and on top of it, we're trying to guide women into closer relationships with God and others. When would we ever find time to rest? To be still?

But God knows best, and he says we should do it. So here's the challenge. Be still. Take Psalm 46:10 to heart today. This week. This month. Find even 5 minutes to sit down. Close your eyes. Be still. Don't write in your journal. Don't read a devotion. Don't memorize a verse. Just be still and know that he is God.

Be still.

“ Oh, that I had wings like a dove; then I would fly away and rest! ”

Psalm 55:6



Amy Nappa leads the women's team at Group. She's not very good at being still...but she's working on it!



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A Latté for Leaders

My Movie

Here's a creative way to get to know a little more about your team members.

Each person should bring a DVD or video clip (about 5 minutes long) from a movie or TV show to help others get a better idea of who she is. For example, a woman who is close to her sisters might bring a clip from *Little Women*. Someone who's competitive or loves action could show a car chase scene from a Bond movie. The person who loves to laugh might show a clip from a sitcom or comedy movie.

You can share all in one evening, showing clip after clip, with breaks for explanation or comments in between, or let team members take turns over the course of several gatherings. Be sure you cover any guidelines about content ahead of time. What language would be considered offensive? What about violence? Be sure everyone is on the same page so there aren't any surprises.

Pop some popcorn, and have fun getting to know each other through the movie screen!



Leading With a Limp

by Linda Crawford

You're a leader. Perhaps you feel confident in your ability to lead, but it's likely you sometimes question why God called you to do the job. You're in good company; even senior pastors feel the same. In one study, only 6% of senior pastors said they believed they had the spiritual gift of leadership. That means 94% of pastors feel they're not gifted leaders. God often calls exactly that type of person into leadership. Consider this:

- Moses had a speech impediment.
- Gideon was a coward.
- David was young.
- Esther was a nobody.
- Mary was a pregnant teenager.
- Paul was a murderer.

Even Jesus picked unlikely leaders. He bypassed the rabbinical "A" students who could recite the Torah from memory and chose the "C" students—a bunch of fishermen and a loathed tax collector—to be his disciples. These people had weaknesses and failures, yet those things did not disqualify them from being used by God. In fact, they qualified them.

Our culture will tell you to lead from your strength, to "put your best foot forward." God wants you to do the

opposite. He wants your flawed foot forward, the one you limp on. God wants you to draw on his strength to move.

Do you have a weakness? A vulnerability that as a leader you would rather nobody ever saw? Leaders often think if weakness is exposed, no one will follow. However, the opposite is true. The more you try to hide your weaknesses, the more you may try to control the people and programs you lead, and the more insecure you'll become. You might become inflexible, defensive, and demanding, prompting others to distrust and eventually disrespect you as a genuine leader.

Being honest about your weaknesses won't cause people to disrespect you. Instead, they'll respect that you allow them to see the true strength of your character—your dependence on God.

Embrace your weaknesses, recognizing they're opportunities for God's strength to be shown in your life. Don't be a leader who tries to be, do, and appear perfect. Be a leader who leads with a limp. One who puts God's strength on display instead of her own. Those who follow will learn to lead with a limp too!

Linda Crawford is the author of a number of Bible studies and women's ministry resources. Linda loves red shoes and race cars and is passionate about helping women pursue God with no speed limits.

Behind the Coffee Counter



Conversations With Real Women in Ministry

Joani Schultz, chief creative officer for Group Publishing, has seen many changes in women's ministry. We asked her to share some of her insights and stories.

Expresso: *What never seems to change in women's ministry?*

Joani: My world of women in ministry goes waaaay back! I watched my mom be an amazing model of compassion and servanthood. She served others by visiting elderly people in the nursing home, volunteering at church, and "adding more water to the soup" anytime someone stopped by our home at mealtime. I also watched women in our church grow close through Bible study groups. No matter what anyone faced, women supported each other.

Some days I long for women today to have what my mom had. We're wired for relationship, yet our culture, jobs, two-income households, and families living away from extended family easily pull us apart, keeping us busy. The days of afternoon quilting bees are long gone.

Here's what doesn't change: We women are still relationship specialists, willing to support, nurture, and pour into others' lives. I marvel at the compassion women show to one another. It makes me smile when I hear someone bubbling over to share the best bargains or freely giving a listening ear and warm hug.

Expresso: *What most thrills you about friendships with other women?*

Joani: I'm a friend fanatic. I treasure girlfriend time and make it a priority in my life. I have women in my life who have been with me for decades. When we connect, it's like time doesn't matter. Even though we've been apart, we pick up as if we saw each other yesterday. I love that about my girlfriends!

Expresso: *What's one lesson you've learned the hard way when working with groups of women or developing women's resources?*

Joani: I'm always learning. I think the value of direct communication is an important lesson in working with women. I've come to realize our relational, caring, nurturing tendencies have a dark side. Because we don't want to hurt someone's feelings, we avoid what we think will cause conflict. I've learned the importance of talking to the person directly instead of complaining behind the scenes. It's hard to do but worth it.

When it comes to creating resources for women, I have a tendency to want to push women faster and deeper than they're ready to go, but sometimes I'm surprised. I remember the retreat when we paired strangers for a foot washing experience the first night. Pretty deep for starters, but profound things happened. God still is in control—not me!

Expresso: *If you could share one thing to encourage women in ministry, what would it be?*

Joani: Don't be afraid of leading. Don't hold back in making decisions that you know are right, even if they might cause conflict in the short run. Trust God. Fear not!



Shower Savvy

by Courtney Walsh

There's nothing ordinary about welcoming new life into the world, and baby shower celebrations don't have to be ordinary either. Create a fun event everyone will want to attend. We've put together key elements to help you plan a quick, simple, and memorable baby shower celebration.



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Reason To Celebrate

You can host a shower every time a woman in your church has a new baby or host one big annual shower to celebrate all the new births of the year. Perhaps you'll host an outreach shower, donating gifts to a local pregnancy center. Or partner with children's ministry leaders to determine what's needed to replenish supplies in your nursery and preschool rooms.

Invitations

A store-bought or computer-generated invitation will work well, especially if you're inviting all the women in your church. Be sure to include pertinent information, such as:

- shower recipient (a new mom, all babies of the year, pregnancy center, children's ministry)
- date, time, and location
- RSVP contact, phone number or e-mail address
- gift registries, if applicable.

If you're creating computer-generated invitations, you can add a short verse:

*Sweet little toes, adorable nose,
A baby is heaven on earth.
A gift from the Lord, loved and adored,
Come celebrate this new baby's birth.*

To create the feel of a handmade, personalized invitation, check out the following websites:

- tinyprints.com
- lusciousverde.com
- peartreegreetings.com

Decorations

Decorations don't need to cause stress. Balloon bouquets are inexpensive and add big flair when decorating. Add streamers and confetti for pop. Gather an assortment of toys to scatter throughout the room. Farm toys, army men, trucks, and tractors all make a fun display for a boy's shower, while dolls, teddy bears, and tiny tea sets create a little-girl feel. Involve several women by asking them to bring their best toys to create small displays as centerpieces.

For added fun, string a clothesline across the room, and hang brand new baby clothes, baby washcloths, bibs, and blankets. Once the shower is finished, gather all the items for the guest of honor to take home. For another option, decorate an artificial Christmas tree with white lights, using shoes, toys, and other tiny items as ornaments that become gifts after the shower.



Welcoming Babies

For outreach-focused showers, set up a gift-wrapping station. Provide wrapping paper, tape, bows, and cards for your guests to take turns wrapping their gifts. Have women write “To: A very special baby, Love: (Insert name of your church).” Pile the presents on a gift table. Before the shower is over, pray over the gifts, asking God to bless the women who receive the gifts.

Pink or Blue Fruit and Yogurt Bar

Create your own yogurt parfaits by providing guests with vanilla, blueberry, and strawberry (or raspberry) yogurt and an assortment of toppings. Include fresh fruit such as blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries. Add a bowl of granola, and your guests will have a snack that’s well-balanced, healthy, and delicious.

Mommy and Me

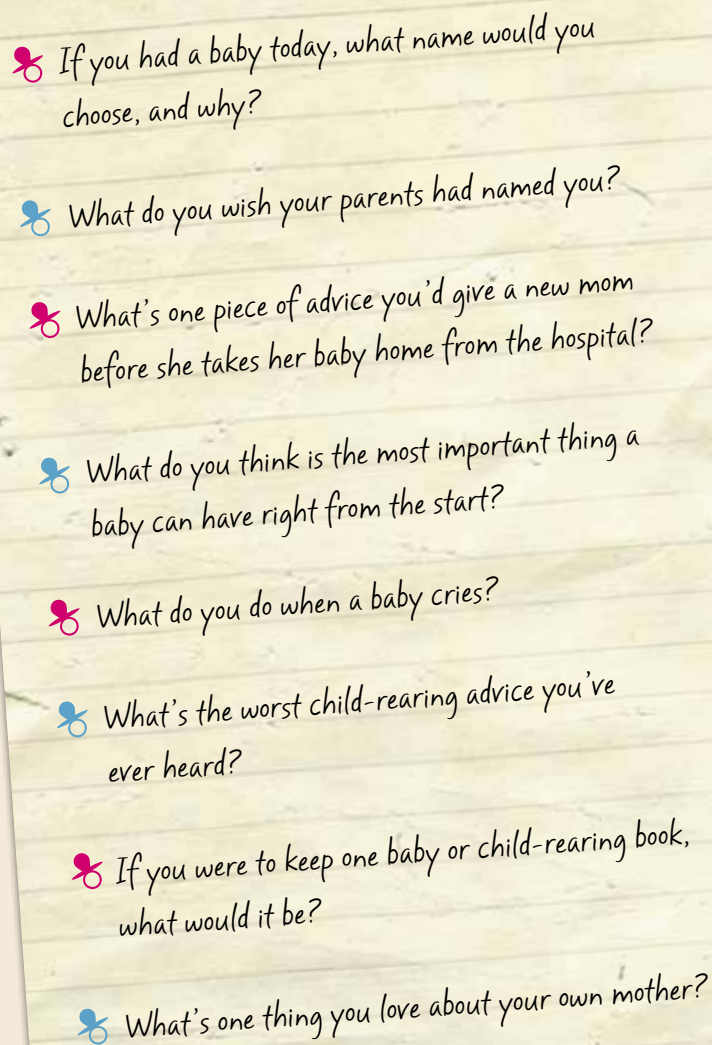
Get all your guests mingling by giving each person a strip of paper with a question. We’ve created some questions to make it easy for you. Have women walk around the room until you sound a noisy baby toy. Then women will partner with the nearest person and chat about their discussion questions. Allow 2 minutes, and then have women mingle again. When they stop, they need to find new partners, so after several rounds, women will have the opportunity to make a few new friends.

Wishing Well

Set out a large wicker basket (or other decorative container) for “Wish Gifts.” On your invitation, ask your guests to bring one small unwrapped gift for the Wishing Well. The gift should reflect a wish that person has for the guest of honor. For instance, someone could bring a receiving blanket and attach a wish that says “I wish your baby warm nights and a safe covering.” A package of baby bottles might accompany a wish for “a full belly and a full heart.” Encourage your guests to be creative.

Affirmation Station

Purchase a small photo album and colored index cards or other decorative blank paper to fit into the photo album sleeves. Invite guests to write words of affirmation on the cards. Place them in the book to give to your guest of honor. In addition to words of affirmation, you can ask guests to include a piece of advice they wish they’d known when they became a parent. These precious notes will turn a blank book into a cherished keepsake.

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- ✂ If you had a baby today, what name would you choose, and why?
 - ✂ What do you wish your parents had named you?
 - ✂ What’s one piece of advice you’d give a new mom before she takes her baby home from the hospital?
 - ✂ What do you think is the most important thing a baby can have right from the start?
 - ✂ What do you do when a baby cries?
 - ✂ What’s the worst child-rearing advice you’ve ever heard?
 - ✂ If you were to keep one baby or child-rearing book, what would it be?
 - ✂ What’s one thing you love about your own mother?

Courtney Walsh is a wife, mommy, and freelance writer living in Colorado. She consumes mass quantities of coffee and blogs at courtneywalsh.typepad.com

Expressly Organized

Pampering Essentials

Women enjoyed being pampered. Pampering is a great addition to any outreach event, team-building, or small group celebration. Make it easier to offer this fantastic treat to women by gathering and keeping some basic items. Some supplies cost more than others, but don't let a larger purchase stop you. Share your dreams with others. Together you can watch for sales. The more people who know your shopping list, the more options you'll be able to explore.

- Paraffin bath
- Paraffin
- Plastic hand wraps for paraffin
- Hand towels
- Nail polish
- Toothpicks (for small nail designs)
- Cotton-tip swabs and cotton balls
- Nail polish remover
- Hand sanitizer
- Headbands
- Facial scrub/masks
- Deep plastic containers (for foot soaks)



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Spa-On-The-Go

Five Ways to Pamper Your Community

By Susan Lawrence

Serve women around your community by packing basic pampering supplies and creating a Spa-On-The-Go. Here's where to go and how to do it!

- **Assisted living facilities**—Find out when a facility is planning a special evening event, such as Senior Prom or a concert, and spend the day showering the women with pampering preparations.
- **College dorms**—Many ministries are looking for ways to reach and involve young women. Meet them where they are. And when you pamper them, girls are likely to chat. What a great way to get to know them!
- **Emergency shelters**—When women experience tragedy, they're busy dealing with the essentials of life. Work with emergency shelter personnel to set up a discreet location where women can relax, be pampered, and take a break from the stress of life.
- **Medical center**—Women work long hours to care for others. Set up a pampering station in the break room for women to savor a quick moment of rejuvenation in the middle of a busy day.
- **Women's shelters**—Some women have rarely been touched in loving ways. Hand massages, simple facials, and paraffin dips can help women soak in sensitive service.

Susan Lawrence is passionate about equipping and encouraging women through writing and speaking. For more encouragement, visit purepurposebook.wordpress.com.

Expanding Your Reach

Break the Mold

by Amber Van Schooneveld

With every turn, I seem to be bumping into ladies who don't fit the expected mold of a family—a working dad, two or three kids, and a mommy at home. In church, at work, and among friends, I'm noticing more and more women who don't fit this mold. Some women are divorced, others are not able to afford to stay at home with their children, a lot of women enjoy pursuing careers outside of the home, and many others are finding themselves single and childless well past their 20s.

In the past, many women's ministries have catered to stay-at-home moms or empty nesters by offering events during weekdays. Even with the shift toward more women working outside the home, many women's ministry activities still leave out this precious group of women who are in need of a little love.

Does your women's ministry (and church as a whole) make women outside the traditional expectations feel welcome? Ask yourself if there are any subtle messages you're sending out that make working women, single ladies, or divorced women feel like second-class citizens. Even something as simple as a meeting time can leave a woman feeling left out or even ostracized.

Think about ways you can minister to all women. How about holding every other meeting or event at a time that is convenient for a working woman, such as after work hours or on the weekend? Not everyone will be able to make every meeting, but it will help you let these women know that they're important to your church and ministry.

You can also begin smaller "career women" groups or support groups for divorced women or single moms where they can come together and talk about the unique challenges of their lives. Just as stay-at-home moms are facing real struggles trying to juggle toddlers and housework, women working through the transitions of divorce are facing struggles they probably never thought they'd face.

Remember to include all the ladies of your church in your ministry. Allow God to work through the many different parts of Christ's body in your midst.

“If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.”

1 Corinthians 12:17-18



Amber Van Schooneveld is a writer for Compassion International by day and a freelance writer by night. One of her secret loves is eating cereal for dinner, and when she grows up, she would like to be a full-time tourist.

Just a Taste

A Resource Review

We recently chatted with Karla Dornacher, author of newly released *The Sweet Taste of Friendship* (Thomas Nelson), a beautiful gift book filled with an assortment of friendship celebrations, including recipes, poems, quotes, craft projects, personalization pages, and Scripture.

Expresso: *You've created opportunities throughout The Sweet Taste of Friendship for women to make personal notes to a friend. How does gift-giving encourage friendships?*

Karla: Gift-giving says I care about you. We have no idea how we brighten the day of another woman just by reaching out to her in some small way. Nothing says "friendship" like a personal note to someone about the impact they've had on your life.

Expresso: *You've included some scrumptious recipes. Can you share a story of a favorite?*

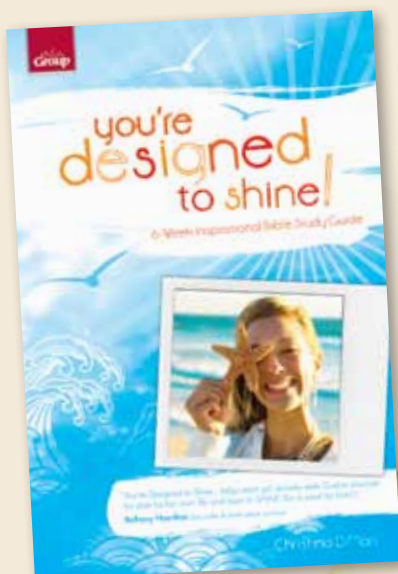
Karla: I'm not a great cook, so what I love about all the recipes in *The Sweet Taste of Friendship* is how quick and easy they are to prepare and share. One of the best is the apple cinnamon crumb pie. The pecan shortbread cookies add a special flavor and make a perfect "welcome to the neighborhood," a gift for a new mom, or a simple, sweet way to say you care.

Expresso: *How has your life been blessed through the process of creating The Sweet Taste of Friendship?*

Karla: Every time I have the opportunity to write or create art about friendships, I am blessed. It makes me think about all the incredible women God has placed along the path of my life over the years and the unique impact each has had on my life. Friendships are meant to be celebrated, and that's what this little book is all about. I love the journal pages where women write a personal message to a friend because it gives the opportunity to think about shared memories. I had the best time reminiscing as I filled out those journal pages for my two sisters!



We have 10 free copies of Karla's book to give away! Go to the Group for Women Facebook page and tell us what you liked best about this issue of Expresso. We'll randomly choose 10 winners from those responses!



Expressly for You

Summer may be over, but you can still enjoy a beach-themed Bible study! We've revised *You're Designed to Shine* so it's both easier and more affordable to lead. This six-week study is perfect to use with younger women in your church—let women discover how God has created them to shine! Expresso subscribers receive 10% off the purchase of these Bible studies now through October 31. Use code WM11108 when placing your order at group.com or by calling 800-447-1070.

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