

Ladies Ministries at Grace

(By Donna Stickley)

Every woman at Grace Community Church has a unique personality, experience and strength that comprises The Ladies Ministries at Grace. Together, we seek to extend the church's mission through discipleship, service and fellowship. What does this look like?

Discipleship is at the heart of the Ladies Ministries at Grace. Discipling one another – coming alongside a sister in her Christian walk and growing together – happens through women connecting in small, intimate prayer teams, larger Bible studies, application-driven HELP! groups, fun social events, and meaningful service opportunities. Whether a woman has walked with the Lord for decades or days, there is a place for her in the Ladies Ministries at Grace.

Our focus on women discipling one another begins with our Prayer Teams. These groups are comprised of six to twelve women who have committed to meeting monthly in fervent prayer for their families, our community, and their own personal needs. Nearly 70 women are currently involved in these groups, with more women joining existing groups and new groups continuing to form. Most groups meet at the church, though some meet in individual lady's homes. Between monthly meetings, women who are part of a prayer group share one another's burdens and hold each other accountable through quick messages and requests shared via texts, Facebook or email. These are not "social" gatherings, but there is an intimate connection to the women in one's prayer group when you commit to praying for each other continually, as 1 Thessalonians 5:17 exhorts us.

A critical part of discipling one another is finding our foundation in the Word of God. The Ladies Ministries seek to grow one another in the truth of Scripture through large group Bible studies offered typically twice during the year, and, new for 2017, HELP! groups.

Ladies Bible Studies typically meet on Tuesday evenings during AWANA from 6:30-8:00 pm in The Café for a 7-week Fall study, and then meet again in January for a 7-week Winter study. We are blessed to have so many biblical study resources available to us to help us understand how to walk as women of faith, deepen our relationship with Christ and impact those around us. A few of the studies we have offered include those from Beth Moore, Carol Kent, Priscilla Shirer, Anne Voskamp, and Kyle Idleman. If you feel you need to dig deeper into God's Word or are just beginning on your journey into the Bible, these Bible studies offer a great starting point to refresh yourself in our Creator's love letter to us, alongside sisters in Christ.

HELP! groups are offered for anyone, not only ladies. Women, men, and families will grow in living out their faith through these discussion groups that will focus on different topics each week from February to April on Tuesday nights during AWANA. Topics will include biblical application to real-life situations such as how to minister to a loved one diagnosed with cancer, how to have a Godly approach to technology, how to care for aging parents, and much more. Each night will consist of Q&A sessions with a panel of brothers and sisters in Christ who have walked through these situations, and sound, biblical teaching from Pastor Paul Crichton.

As we grow in our understanding of Christ's love for us, we naturally want to show His love to those around us. There are ample opportunities and ways to serve at Grace Community. One area of service the Ladies Ministry specifically focuses on is Grace Community's Meals Ministry or Food Teams. Ladies who commit to being part of these teams help with meals for funeral dinners and illness situations, as needs arise. They are typically called upon about once a month. This is a wonderful way to use the resources and gifts God has given to extend love and grace to those who have a burden that we can help bear.

Finally, as we are doing life together, this includes making time for fun, fellowship, laughter and getting to know one another better. The ladies at Grace get together quarterly for creative activities that offer something for everyone. Past fellowship activities have included "A Latte Fun" night filled with chocolate, chatter and coffee, Canvas painting with no artistic skills required, an annual Mother-Daughter gathering, and various short day trips.

There is such blessing in seeing the Lord use a seasoned sister in Christ to mentor a new believer, or a new woman of faith bringing fresh life to a sister grown weary in her walk. Wherever you are in your station in life or in your Christian journey, we are so glad you have found yourself here, seeking what the Lord has in store for you and for the building of His kingdom through being part of the Ladies Ministries at Grace Community.