

## HOSTING A GUEST IN YOUR HOME

They are COMING!!!! Those words can strike fear or excitement, can't they?

Opening your home to guests can be a fulfilling and rewarding experience. A strong connection is made when folks, whether family or friends, are invited to stay in your home. Use some of these tips to ensure these times are memorable for them. When you tell someone to "make themselves at home," really mean it by doing a little bit of preparation in advance.

Being a great host is only the beginning. Having them feel at home and comfortable is the goal. Praying for them and their stay is a privilege. As you go through your day of preparing their space, lift their names to Heaven. Concentrate on JUST them while you are doing it.

Simple ideas that your guests will appreciate

- Private, comfortable space
- Soft, clean bedding
- Extra blankets and special towels
- Fluffy pillows, at least 2 per person
- A basket of food and drinks (crackers, candy, water)
- Books and magazines that you have already read and they can take with them
- Notepad and pen
- WiFi password
- Extra charging cords and cubes
- Extra toiletries, toothbrush, shampoo and conditioner, lotion, feminine products (The travel size bottles that you get from a hotel are perfect for leaving for your guests)
- Plunger in the bathroom
- Extra Toilet Paper, kept in the bathroom
- Pot-pourri & room spray
- Extra over the door hooks
- Extra hangers in the Closet
- Surfaces for guests to put their things, cleared from personal items
- A place for their suitcase

Luxurious Ideas to really WOW your guests:

- Bathrobe & slippers
- Special Guest Information Guide (complete with household quirks and emergency contact numbers)
- List of places and things to do, take out menus, local map or travel guide really want to take it up a notch and be considered a fabulous hostess, you can use some
- Butler's Tray on the kitchen counter, filled with grab and go food items for breakfast and lunch
- Sparkling water
- Coffee maker (kuerig?) with cups and coffee cups with all the fixens.
- I like to include food items for the local area, Texas is famous for a lot of fantastic food items, a basket of these is a really neat treat.
- Luggage rack
- Medical kit with tweezers
- Lamps
- Night light to lead the way to the bathroom, in the middle of the night
- Fans
- Charging station for Phone and tablet
- Floor length mirror
- Laundry basket
- Sound machine
- Ear plugs
- Eye Mask
- A handwritten note, letting them know how happy you are that they are with you
- Filled baskets of outing essentials

See if there are any allergies or food preferences before creating the menu. If time doesn't allow for you to cook all of the meals, then having some grab and go items for breakfast and lunch are easy ways to keep your guests fed and then y'all can just all go out to eat for the main evening meal.

The main thing is to be in the moment with your guests. It is not their intention to have you slave away for them...They probably even want to help you around the house and in the kitchen. They are visiting because they want to BE with you. Make that extra effort to BE with them. Allow for some down time. Make the memories count. Enjoy their company. Connect!!!



## **WANT TO START A LADIES MINISTRY, BUT NOT SURE WHERE TO BEGIN?**

1. Identify a potential leader through prayer. Another option is to have the pastor's wife lead it until it is clear who should fill the role as ladies' leader/director. Purchase resources for women's ministry through Pentecostal Publishing or on-line. Or take advantage of the plethora of ideas on the web.
2. Establish a vision and mission. What are you setting out to do? Basically, you want to have a purpose.
3. Identify the needs of the ladies within the body. Use a survey or just look around. What are the demographics of the church? Is it a mix of age groups, mothers with/without children at home, stay at home/business professionals? This will help you determine how to move forward.
4. Plan, plan, plan – after you have identified who to serve? What activities or events can be planned to meet the needs of these individuals? How often do you want to schedule ladies' events? What days of the week would be most attended? Should you alternate days to cater to a variety of women? For example, some ladies may be able to come on Saturday some months, but a week night might work for others. Switching it up allows for everyone to have an opportunity to attend at some point throughout the year. Schedule all events before the start of the year. Set dates and basic event and fill in the details quarterly.
5. Ideas for events/activities to schedule for the year include:
  - Devotions/teaching lead by the leader or other ladies in the church
  - Game nights with light snacks or appetizers
  - Outdoor Activities: Hikes, Canoeing, Picnics
  - Book club for the avid readers
  - Workshops - arts and crafts such as wreaths, canvas painting, floral design, spiritual disciplines, mentoring, budgeting and finances, food planning and prep, basic sewing skills, board and brush – the possibilities are endless. This could be planned with a split session as to give options since not everyone would enjoy learning or doing the same things. Throughout the year, write down observations of what you see people do or identify what they are good at. You can incorporate that into the next planning year.
  - Go to a coffee shop and enjoy fellowship or a Bible Study
  - Host/Facilitate a 6- or 8-week Bible Study. Tons of resources on the internet for women's Bible study



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5. Ideas for events/activities to schedule for the year include:

- Change up your meeting locations – see if ladies in the church want to host one of the events. Many women love to open their homes and it gives them a chance to use their gift of hospitality.
- Community volunteer opportunities
- District ladies' events and/or schedule a retreat for your local ladies at a time opposite of the district one. Some ladies do better in smaller groups and may be more apt to come to church ladies retreat versus the larger district retreat.
- Mother's Day banquet, yearly Friendsgiving party at Thanksgiving, Christmas Banquet.
- Include the younger girls sometimes. Great opportunity to showcase how fun ladies' ministry is and get them engaged early (as soon as their 16 they will want to join).
- Secret Sisters for a quarter.
- Prayer Meetings

6. Gather e-mails, phone numbers, addresses and create a group e-mail/text. Be intentional about sending monthly "Ladies News" to keep everyone up to date with the details for the current month and upcoming events. Also – don't forget about social media. Create a private Facebook page for those who utilize social media. You can post the monthly events there, share updates, prayer request, encourage one another and use it as an interactive tool. Don't accept individuals outside of your church body. This page should only be used for church members to honor privacy and sharing. Make announcement in church bulletin. The best way to get people to attend ladies' events is to personally invite them. Share the excitement and encourage other ladies too as well. Ensure you have a page on the church website. Advertising events and showcasing previous events.

7. Create a team (formal or informal) who can help plan and carry out the details. Make the time together special. Have themes and/or decorate tables. Invite ladies to bring a dish to share when food is needed. Give others an opportunity to serve and be blessed by helping with set-up, and or clean-up. Remember to show gratitude; send personal thank you notes!

8. Lastly, evaluate each year. What was accomplished? What was most attended? What was least attended. How can you make the next year better? Did you meet the needs of the ladies in your church? What should you incorporate into next year? Send out a survey through Survey Monkey and get honest feedback about you as the leader or the ministry. Compile photos and celebrate the memories!



## ***WOMEN REACHING WOMEN***

BY: SARAH CASTONGUE

Daily we are faced with a choice. A choice to either reach or reject. Once you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you then YOU have the ability to reach those around you. Acts 1:8 New Living Translation (NLT) "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." You have the ability to be a witness, now you need the ACTION.

Choosing to reach for others is not complicated. Instead of gossip, you build others up. Instead of selfish ambition, you promote another. Rather than sadness, you spread joy. You choose to live in a way that honors God, avoiding negativity, and avoiding addictive behavior.

Titus 2:3 New Living Translation (NLT) states "Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honors God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers.[a] Instead, they should teach others what is good."

The author wrote specifically to "older women" to encourage them! He goes on to write in Titus 2:4-5 4 These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, 5 to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes,[b] to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God.

We have a responsibility to reach those around us by teaching them and showing them how to live for God. Either we reach those around us or we reject them while focusing on our own goals and desires.

This teaching is daily, while speaking to them on the phone, serving alongside them, and commenting on their social media. Our goal is to reach other women with the Good News of Jesus.

Daily look for an opportunity to reach. Make a phone call to someone lonely. Visit a widow. Drop off a meal for a young mother. Volunteer at a soup kitchen. Serve in your local church. REACH for those around you.



## WAYS I CAN SERVE



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BY SARAH CASTONGUE

- SERVE IN LOCAL CHURCH
- VOLUNTEER AT A PREGNANCY CENTER
- BECOME A FOSTER PARENT
- DONATE CLOTHING OR GENTLY USED GOODS
- GIVE CARE PACKAGES TO HOMELESS
- VOLUNTEER AT HOMELESS SHELTER
- DONATE TO WIDOWS IN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY
- VOLUNTEER AT HOSPITAL
- SERVE ON LOCAL CITY BOARD
- REGULARLY CALL PEERS IN CHURCH
- PRAY FOR THOSE AROUND YOU
- START A BIBLE STUDY
- SOCIALIZE WITH NEIGHBORS
- VOLUNTEER IN LOCAL SCHOOL

Colossians 3:23-24 New Living Translation (NLT)

23 Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. 24 Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.[a]







## OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO BECOME A WOMAN OF DESTINY

Obstacles are inevitable, they are going to happen. Some obstacles appear bigger than others, but the reality is, when we are faced with a trouble, it seems big to us at that moment. And while each one of us will face some sort of trial in our lives, our trouble will look different than someone else's. Some of the most common obstacles are issues such as health, finances, family, relationships, employment, or even tragedy. But when faced with an obstacle we can choose to let it shape us into stronger women, or we can choose to let it consume us and become our identity. With a few simple tools we can overcome trials and we can become women who put our futures in the hands of God, women who choose to live a victorious life, women of destiny.

When faced with a trial, the first thing we must do is pray. The Bible says in 1 Peter 5:7 "Casting your care upon him; for he careth for you." It is imperative that our first instinct is to pray. We should pray at all times, regardless if our life is going the way we planned or not (Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17), but when faced with an unexpected circumstance, we must turn to Him in prayer. He cares dearly about each one of us, and His word says that we can cast our cares upon Him. We can turn to him in every situation in our lives. He holds the answer to every one of our problems, and we must get in the habit of finding a quiet place, spending time with Him, and truly letting go of our problems, trusting that He is taking them from us. Talking to our Savior, the one who gave His life for us, will give us moments of peace, it will give us strength we didn't know we had, and it will increase our faith that we can make it through whatever life is handing us at that moment.

The second tool for overcoming obstacles is finding a community of people that can help encourage us when we need it most. Our church and friendships within the church are incredibly important. As a child I used to listen to a song by Psalty that said "Don't be a lone ranger Christian, doing it all alone, you gotta hang out with other believers to keep your faith real strong" and as simple and silly as those lyrics seem, they taught me that we shouldn't do life alone as Christians. We need the support of our family in Christ. There are moments where we will be the encouragers to someone else, and there will be times we need to rely on others to lift us up.

The Scripture talks about the importance of the body of Christ. Proverbs 17:17 reminds us that "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Proverbs 27:17 tells us that "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." And Matthew 18:20 states "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is clear that God cares about community and friendships, and there is power in unity. We need to connect to our church family, find a few friends, and create a Biblical community that keeps one another lifted up in prayer.



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The other tool to utilize when facing an obstacle is to find scriptures to quote every day. These can be called a mantra, a hymn, or even a shout, but whatever it's called, find a scripture or two and quote it daily until it is etched on your heart and becomes your song. By doing this daily that scripture will become a part of your mindset and will help you overcome the obstacle in your path. Scriptures such as Psalm 27:1, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" may seem intimidating at first when you're in a spot of life that seems impossible but quoting it daily will bring confidence and strengthen your faith. You will quickly notice that this will become your shout. Find multiple scriptures and put them around your house, tape them on your mirrors, hang them on your walls. Make scriptures such as Isaiah 41:13, Psalm 56:3, James 1:2-4, Proverbs 3:5-6, and Psalm 16:8, a part of your daily language. Speak them out loud enough that your fear is reduced, and your trust is put back into His hands.

There are many more ways to help you overcome trials, but these three tools will help anyone facing any size struggle. And the more practice you get, the more tools of your own you will develop to help you face unexpected circumstances. What will your future look like? Will you walk away from trials defeated and defined by your struggle? Or will you walk away an overcomer, head held high, and confident in Christ? Pray and talk to God, find a community and family, and get scriptures to write upon your heart, and you can become a woman of destiny.

