

DEVELOPING *female* LEADERS

NAVIGATE THE MINEFIELDS AND RELEASE
THE **POTENTIAL OF WOMEN** IN YOUR CHURCH



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A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

TEAM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BEST PRACTICE #1: SEEK TO UNDERSTAND

1. What kinds of gender roles did you grow up with? How did you respond to them?
2. How have you seen women be conditioned from our society or churches?
3. Do you think your church has a “stained glass ceiling”? What have you observed that supports your view?
4. Have you ever observed a leader struggle with a “sticky floor” (his or her own behaviors or perspectives are holding that leader back)? What can you do to help women overcome this?
5. Who are some female leaders you could begin asking about their leadership journey?

BEST PRACTICE #2: CLEARLY DEFINE WHAT YOU BELIEVE

1. How clear is your understanding of your church’s theological lines for female leaders in your church? Do you think others on your team have this same level of clarity?

TEAM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

2. Saint Augustine said, “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” From your perspective, does this topic qualify as an “essential” or a “nonessential”?
3. Looking at the theological chart, where would you plot your beliefs growing up? Your beliefs now? Your church’s beliefs?
4. On a scale of 1 to 5, how aligned do you think the daily practices throughout your church’s culture are with your theological beliefs?
5. What next steps does your team need to take to bring more clarity and consistency to this topic?

BEST PRACTICE #3: MINE THE MARKETPLACE

1. Who are some of the marketplace leaders (male or female) contributing in your ministry?
2. How well are you, as a church or team, leveraging the marketplace to access successful female leaders? What improvements can you make?
3. Have you ever been guilty of recruiting quality female leaders but not giving them “real jobs” with fair pay? What underlying philosophy or policy informed that decision?
4. How are you utilizing corporate worship services and other influential platforms to help demonstrate your beliefs about female leaders?
5. How are you helping female leaders transition into ministry, including supporting their husbands and families?

BEST PRACTICE #4: INTEGRATE SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

1. How well does your church integrate spiritual growth and leadership development? For men? For women?

TEAM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

2. Are you missing any opportunities to develop female leaders in your current discipleship programs? What could you do differently?
3. What is your reaction to the idea that, in our culture, men become more likable as they advance in leadership but women become less likable? Why do you think this happens?
4. In the Heidi/Howard résumé experiment, changing a first name altered how someone's abilities were perceived. Describe a time when you've caught yourself having this type of bias.
5. How well does your church help people identify their spiritual gifts and connect those gifts in serving opportunities? Where could you make improvements for women in this process?

BEST PRACTICE #5: BE AN "OTHER"

1. What "others" have played a significant role in your life and leadership? How?
2. How does your church's informal networks help up-and-coming male leaders? Do female leaders get these same experiences?
3. What are your thoughts about the "missing 33 percent"? Are there ways your leadership systems are leaving out critical pieces of development for female leaders?
4. On a scale of 1 to 5, how well are your church's top leaders mentoring female leaders? How about sponsoring female leaders? Providing experienced female coaches?
5. Do you agree that most female leaders on the staff team carry a double shift? Are there ways your church could provide benefits to all employees that would strategically support female leaders who carry a double shift?

TEAM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BEST PRACTICE #6: CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF SAFETY

1. What has been your experience with either sexual abuse or immorality at work or church? How has this impacted you?
2. What's your response to the idea that the Billy Graham Rule needs to be expanded to fit our day and culture? In your culture, what are some adaptations you can make to be protective but inclusive of the women on your team?
3. How well do you think people in your church understand the levels of intimacy and how this should play out in healthy and safe relationships?
4. How can you adjust your personal leadership practices to be able to offer equal opportunities to both men and women whom you lead or influence?
5. What assumptions need to be challenged in your church culture to make sure both male and female leaders can be developed fully?

BEST PRACTICE #7: UPGRADE YOUR PEOPLE PRACTICES

1. Have you ever thought much about bias before? What do you think of the research that concluded that the more strongly one believes he or she has no biases, the more likely that person is to exhibit biased behavior?
2. What stood out to you in the section about female leaders generally not getting equal pay and benefits for the same work? Has your church ever been guilty of this?
3. Do the titles in your team or church accurately describe the responsibilities and authority given to each person? Are you seeing any unintended consequences when these don't match?
4. How well does your church give regular and honest feedback to female leaders? What has been the result of this?

TEAM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5. What are the most important metrics for your church to start measuring? What do you hope this will accomplish?

BEST PRACTICE #8: TAKE ON YOUR CULTURE

1. How big of a shift will it be for your culture to begin doing a better job developing female leaders? What will likely be the biggest area of resistance?
2. How well does your team fully listen to a woman's thoughts and perspectives? Have you ever engaged in or experienced "maninterrupting"?
3. Verna Myers said, "Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance." What do you think of this quote? How are female leaders "invited" into leading in your church? How are they "asked to dance" in leading in your church?
4. Are there strategic symbolic moves you could make that would highlight female leaders in your culture?
5. How fast is your church culture able to change? What are the most important steps you can take to pave the way to changing your culture to be better at developing female leaders?

NEXT STEPS AND FINAL THOUGHTS FOR CHURCHES

1. What do you think about the idea that embracing gender diversity might help your church do a better job with ethnic diversity?
2. From the suggested list of "next steps," which one do you think is the *most* important to tackle in the next thirty days?
3. When it comes to developing female leaders, where do you hope your church could be in five years?

BEST PRACTICES FOR FEMALE LEADERS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has been the hardest part of getting clear on your calling?
2. How well do you know and understand your ministry environment?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most natural), how natural is it for you to have an “Enough for Everyone” mind-set?
4. What cards are you mostly likely to play? How can you approach difficult situations in a healthy but assertive way?
5. Do you have support systems? If so, how often do you invest in or access them? What is one thing you can do this week to be more involved?
6. Which statement from the “Words of Encouragement” section spoke to you the most, and why?