

## **Tips for Starting Your Own Young Women in Ministry Fellowship**

1. Identify a core group of women who sense, and take seriously, the call of God to ministry on their lives. Not everyone's call has to be the same, or at the same stage. They could be ordained women, women who have recently accepted their call to ordained ministry, women with a very clear and focused sense of their calls to lay ministry, and even women who feel they are called but are unsure of the specific area of ministry. The purpose of this type of fellowship is to allow women with a shared sense of purpose to edify, exhort, and encourage one another in a safe, confidential setting.
2. Don't limit your group to just your circle of friends. Initially, you may not even know the women well with whom you're forming the fellowship. What's important is the shared sense of purpose and calling that flows through the group. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to a group of women with whom you can share and grow.
3. Set parameters. Decide as a group:
  - how often you'll meet (once a month usually works well)
  - what times and for how long you will meet (1-2 hours is typically a realistic goal)
  - where you will meet (one idea is to rotate meeting at each other's houses, but make sure you will have sufficient privacy, so that all group members feel comfortable sharing)
  - the goals of the group
  - the structure and format for meetings (what will happen at each meeting should be planned in advance, so that valuable time is not wasted; e-mail is a good way to iron out the details ahead of time)
  - whether you will seek to hold each other accountable in certain areas of your lives and ministries, etc.

Once you have set the parameters, be faithful to them and make sure the whole group is in agreement before changing them.

4. Use the Word of God and other trusted sources of information in your discussions but this fellowship is not meant to be a bible study. Think of it more like a support group where you get to share openly, receive support and apply what you have learned in your life to support someone else.
5. Don't let the group get too big. One key to sharing and developing trust is to keep the group to a manageable size. A sense of what is "manageable" will vary by group, but generally once the group gets to around ten people, you may want to pray before expanding further.
6. Work to establish trust. Everything shared in the fellowship should be absolutely confidential. Group members need to feel free to share their hearts, knowing that the things they share will not go beyond the circle. Building trust takes time and experience with those in the group, so be patient as every woman develops her own pace and comfort level for sharing. It is not always necessary to share intensely personal details about each other's lives in order to be a blessing to one another. If the group stays true to its purpose, however, in time people generally feel more and more comfortable with sharing, and the environment for sharing should be protected.
7. Respect the group. Don't invite new members to join or attend the group unless the whole group is in agreement. Be honest with yourself and the group about your ability to participate, etc. If there comes a point when you can no longer be actively involved, do what is necessary to keep the group moving forward.
8. Enjoy and be blessed!

### **Sample Meeting Agenda**

12:00	Refreshments, mingling (Try hard to arrive on time!)
12:15	Opening prayer and scripture
12:25	Business matters for the group
12:45	Topic of the day (Example: Family, God, Ministry, Work — What order should they come in? Realistically, how are they ordered in your life? What can we do to prioritize correctly?)
1:35	Personal sharing/prayer requests (You may want to agree to a time limit, per person.)
1:55	Closing prayer
2:00	Adjournment