

Vineyard Women Mentoring Month Three

Men and Women Leading Together

Introduction:

There has never been a more urgent time in recent history when we needed clear, healthy guidelines for men and women working together—whether in the church or business world. Scandals, lawsuits, firings, sexual harassment accusations, misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations abound! There is no question help is needed to sort through the messes and discover how we can truly partner together, especially as the Body of Christ.

This month we will discuss this ‘hot’ topic of women and men working together. There was a time—not that long ago—that this was not a big issue, especially not in the church where very few women had leadership staff positions alongside the men. However, with more and more women assuming leadership roles on church staffs, there is the need to define healthy working relationships. There is a current ‘raging’ argument about the imposition of rules in the workplace that are designed to prevent men and women from having lunch, riding in the car together, working alone, etc. due to the fear of sexual impropriety. This in many ways hinders true, healthy working relationships between men and women. What is best? What does the Holy Spirit say? Let’s discuss!

If possible, I highly recommend each one read:

Equal to the Task: Men and Women in Partnership by Ruth Haley Barton

https://www.amazon.com/Equal-Task-Men-Women-Partnership/dp/0830813578/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1507595126&sr=8-1&dpID=51VYAVw5kJL&preST=SY344_BO1,204,203,200_QL70_&dpSrc=detail

This book asks the question--Would you like to

- discover how to break through gender barriers at the office?
- learn how to work through conflicts on ministry teams?
- have a healthy friendship with a man or woman who is not your spouse?
- better understand the relationship between sexuality and spirituality?
- move beyond stereotyping to godly partnerships?

God has created male and female to live in community as one. Yet in the church we have created systems that segregate and limit us rather than unify and free us. But we can *be together* the way God intended--not only as husbands and wives in the safety of marriage but also as brothers and sisters in the safety of community.

The disciplines of biblical community, partnership in marriage, good communication and more can help us serve God together. Only a radical return to Christian community can take men and women beyond ineffective relational patterns to genuine models of mutuality and interdependence. Ruth Barton's biblical insights, personal experience, extensive research and real-life interviews will help you take significant steps toward true teamwork in all of your cross-gender relationships.

This is a very good book! Ruth is a highly respected author and has been a true champion for women in the church. Each chapter is packed with powerful truths and ends with a series of helpful questions that encourage honest answers with practical application. Consider using this for a small group of men and women who work together in your local church.

Discussion Questions

1. If you had the chance to read the book, share 1-2 insights that were most meaningful to you.
2. What are some of the biggest obstacles you have encountered in working with the opposite sex? Does it matter if the men are younger? Older?
3. What have you found helps to encourage healthy partnership between men and women? What discourages?
4. What is your church's policy for men and women working together? Do you have rules regarding travel together, meals, meetings, etc.? How has this worked or not worked?
5. How can we best foster greater respect for the opposite sex?
6. How does your marriage relationship(if you are married!) intersect with male/female relationships at work?
7. What have been your feelings, thoughts about the recent revelations in Hollywood, Fox News, etc concerning the pervasive harassment and abuse of women?