



## HELPING CHURCH LEADERS MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE

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### **“DEVELOPING LEADERS, 99 LIVES AND FINDING BALANCE... WOMEN’S MINISTRIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY”**

Ministry is born out of the life issues and concerns of people and changes in the culture. In many congregations, staffing for ministry reflects these same issues and concerns. A cursory look at the evolution of church staffing responsibilities over the past forty years reveals the connection between the creation of new staff positions and the ministry opportunities found in the population and community. Three current examples are the needs of women, children and families. Two weeks ago, Leadership Network held its second annual forum for leaders of women’s ministries in large churches.

The “top ten “ issues addressed by the 48 leaders who attended included: (1) leadership development; (2) organizational structure; (3) volunteer recruitment; (4) finding balance in ministry/personal life; (5) identifying the needs of today’s woman; (6) issues of the working woman; (7) program development; (8) outreach to the community and uninvolved church members; (9) creative Bible study; and (10) boundary and time management issues. The following are three of several key themes of the discussion.

**Women’s Ministries are becoming more relational oriented and less program / event oriented.** Programs and events used to be the focus of many women’s ministries but now the emphasis is more relational based. “Programs used to be an end unto themselves but now the program is a means to a relationship...to Christ... and to others.” There is also a growing understanding of process over program and being more flexible in terms of scheduling and approaches. “Bigger events are not necessarily better any longer...women don’t want the superficial any more...and learning styles are changing.”

**There is an increasing need for leadership development, both at the staff and lay leader level.** Women’s ministry leadership often began on a volunteer or part time basis but as the expectations of women and the complexity of ministering to the diversity of women have increased, leaders are becoming more professionally trained and equipped. Likewise, lay leaders in women’s ministries have higher expectations for leadership development and being equipped with appropriate skills.

**Finding balance is a critical issue for women in general and for leaders of women’s ministries.** Most women today, regardless of age, seem to have “99 lives.” Their lives are too complicated as they juggle multiple roles and full schedules. Helping women find balance in their lives and providing “soul care” are important elements in effective women’s ministry for the 21st century.

**A set of the complete notes from the 1996 Women’s Ministries Forum  
is available for \$10 by calling Leadership Network at 1-800-765-5323.**

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