

PERSPECTIVE

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH

WOMEN'S MINISTRY TODAY

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WOMEN'S MINISTRY TODAY



She said to me, “I just don’t learn very well from men,” and I struggled to gather my thoughts.

“Did she really just say that?” I said to myself. “What does she mean? Can she not hear my preaching? Does she struggle to hear any preaching that comes from a man?” We had been discussing the women’s ministry at our church, which mainly consisted of several women coming together to watch a video of Beth Moore each week. An extraordinary teacher, Moore’s stories, humor, and point-of-view clearly resonated with this church member.

At the time, I didn’t know how to respond. I was glad she could profit from this popular, evangelical teacher. I trusted she learned many, many good things. But something didn’t seem right about a ministry that pulled members away from the life of the local church—a life where God ordained biblically-qualified men to be shepherds and teachers. Women’s ministry, for her, was a place where church ministry went to die.

I began to wrestle with several questions: Why do we have women’s ministry? Should we have women’s ministry? How does women’s ministry fit into the daily rhythms of our church? Over the years, I’ve thought more about these questions. Of course, I don’t claim to have figured it all out, but I’m grateful for the women’s ministry at Mount Vernon. It has changed over time. Furthermore, I think there is a lot of freedom for different churches to organize women’s ministry in different ways.

I’m really thankful for the women’s ministry at Mount Vernon. Throughout the years, I’ve worked closely with the Ministry Coordinators who devote significant time, energy, and prayer to building a ministry that glorifies God and serves his daughters. In this essay, I want to share one vision for women’s ministry that I believe is healthy and serves us well today. I’ll approach this topic by asking—and answering—a few important questions.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

We are a people of the Book. We don’t want to stick out our finger, see which way the wind is blowing, and somehow decide how to “do” church. Even when the Bible doesn’t give us clear or specific instruction about how to meet a need, we must nonetheless go to Scripture for the principles to faithfully live together as the people of God, a family of faith.

One principle doesn’t have to do with women at all, but it’s still the right place to start. The Bible says the members of the local church have a responsibility to shepherd one another. I’m not saying every member is a shepherd. We should be thankful that God raises up men to serve as pastors—elders/overseers/shepherds (three titles for the same office). However, the fact that the office of pastor exists should not keep us from the important work of shepherding one another.

One key passage is Hebrews 3:12–13, “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day,

as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” Note well that this word, “brothers,” in Greek, could be gender neutral (much the way we often use “he” today). The author of Hebrews wanted brothers and sisters, men and women, to do the hard work of investing in each other’s lives. We are the spades God has designed to till the spiritual soil of one another’s hearts.

We are to speak and encourage one another daily. If we don’t, it’s possible that our hearts will grow hard to God and his word. Of course, God will lose none of his children (see John 6:37–39). Praise God! Nonetheless, we—brothers and sisters—are the means God has ordained to preserve our faith. This mutual shepherding is a key component of our life together. We aren’t just to rely upon the pastors to do this work. Every member has a role to play.

This is just how families work, don’t they? Dad and mom have a unique responsibility in the home. They do most of the heavy lifting. But the kids aren’t spectators. They have their own role to play—chores to do, opinions to give, encouragement to offer. Everyone in the home has a seat at the dining room table, and everyone in the home—parents and children alike—plays a key role in making the home a healthy and happy place to be.

So it is with the church. We are a family, a team (see John 13:34; Rom. 12:10, 16; 1 Thess. 5:11; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:16; James 5:16). It is crucial for every member to roll up his or her sleeves and make a tangible investment in the spiritual and material lives of brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible says we are to shepherd one another.

But that’s not all. The Bible teaches that pastors are to shepherd the flock—men and women. It is not appropriate for a pastor to say, “I’m going to focus on the men and leave the shepherding of the women to women. I’ll preach to them, but that’s where my shepherding of women ends.” May it never be! Elders are to tenderly, watchfully, and purposefully tend to the spiritual welfare of the whole flock—men and women alike. Through personal conversation, small group discipling, and even biblical counseling, elders have a profound role to play in the formation of every member of the church.

It’s always been interesting to me that when we hear the word “hospitality,” the image of a woman in the kitchen often comes to mind. Back in seminary, I recall pastors’ wives being taught the importance of

being ready with a dessert to be served on a moment’s notice should uninvited guests show up at your door!

There is, of course, nothing wrong with a woman being ready to host a dinner or dessert. It’s good to have a home that is ready and available to entertain Christians and non-Christians alike. But is that really what Paul had in mind when he charged that pastors need to be “hospitable” in 1 Timothy 3:3? The word “hospitality” means, technically, a love for strangers. Elders, then, are to be on the front lines of ministering not just to those in the church, but those outside the church as well. Elders are to model inviting unbelievers into their lives.

But hospitality is about more than serving those you don’t know. It’s about serving the whole church. Alexander Strauch put it well: “The shepherd elder is to give himself lovingly and sacrificially for the care of the flock. This cannot be done from a distance—with a smile and a handshake on Sunday morning or through a superficial visit. Giving oneself to the care of God’s people means sharing one’s life and home with others” (*Biblical Eldership*, 194).

Yes and amen! Elders are to open up their lives and their homes to men and women—to demonstrate hospitality. It’s true that a handshake on Sunday morning is not enough, but I do try to be available before and after services to get to know visitors and church members alike. I want to express my love for the congregation, to be hospitable. And it’s not just me; I often see our elders praying with members after the service, too. Theirs is a sweet ministry. This year, I’m in a covenant group that sometimes meets at my home. What a wonderful opportunity, as a pastor, to disciple men and women alike.

Why all this talk about the ministry of elders? Because, whatever women’s ministry is, it ought not be a replacement for the ministry of elders to the body as a whole. It is pastoral malpractice for an elder to leave the shepherding of women to a women’s ministry team.

The Bible calls us all to shepherd each other and calls elders to oversee the whole flock. Does the Bible have anything specific to say to women? Yes! The Bible uniquely charges women to exemplify the Christian faith and to teach and train each other. This, of course, is the teaching Paul gave in Titus 2:3–5: “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the

young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

We cannot draw a straight line from these verses to women’s ministry in the church. But we must conclude that churches ought to have women who minister in the church! And when you read “older women,” don’t assume Paul is merely referring to the seniors or even the empty nesters. Though those who are older in years may be older in wisdom, this isn’t always the case. Godly young women, like young Timothy, can be wise too (see 1 Tim. 4:12).

Paul wanted women to train younger women in managing the home because most women in the first century were married. Though Paul commends singleness (1 Cor. 7:8), Paul displays a special concern with the family in Titus 2. He is eager for those with experience as wives and mothers to pass along their wisdom to the next generation. Notice how very practical this teaching is. *Women ought to:*

- know what is good (this requires instruction from the Bible);
- love their husbands (who, at times, are hard to love);
- love their children (who are also, at times, hard to love);
- be self-controlled (a piece of the fruit of the Holy Spirit);
- be pure (walking in holiness in all areas of life);
- working at home (an important sphere of work even for those who work outside the home); and
- submissive to their husbands (one way the gospel is displayed in the life of a married woman).

Again, Paul clearly had married women in mind. But he certainly knew that some would be single and some married women would not have children. Knowing what’s good, exercising self-control, and being pure applies to every woman, and every woman is helped by older women coming alongside her with quality teaching.

Whatever a women’s ministry ultimately looks like in a local church, these three biblical principles should be prominent. First, we are all called to shepherd one another. Second, pastors have a special calling

to shepherd the entire flock. Third, older and more mature women are to devote some of their time to discipling the next generation. This is what the Bible says.

HOW SHOULD THESE PRINCIPLES SHAPE WOMEN’S MINISTRY?

The next question is how these three principles should shape a women’s ministry. My first answer may make it seem like I’m going in the wrong direction, but here goes: the local church does not need a women’s ministry, a men’s ministry, a youth ministry, or a children’s ministry or, frankly, any other formalized ministry. All that to say: the church is the ministry.

Before you get upset and throw this article in the trash, hear me out: I’m thankful for such formalized ministries. They can be beneficial. But “beneficial” does not mean necessary. What is necessary is what we find in Ephesians 4:11–16. It’s a long passage, but it’s worth reading slowly:

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

There should be something earthy, organic, and natural about ministry in the local church. What’s most important is not the structure of the ministries we create but the maturity of the Christians we disciple. God is at work, through the teaching of “shepherds and teachers,” equipping whole congregations to be about the work of the ministry. This is a 24/7 ministry—not something we can schedule to take place on Tuesday night or Saturday morning.

To bring it back to the topic of women's ministry, there is nothing wrong with a Wednesday night Bible study with women teaching women—this is a fine application of Titus 2. Nonetheless, even if that hour goes away, we still need women to help women live the Christian life. Such a ministry does not need to happen at any particular hour or under the guidance of any particular team.

If, in God's providence, we lost our building and all of our programs—women's ministry, children's ministry, etc.—we would still be a congregation of saints governed by God's Word and filled by his Spirit. Let me say it one more time: I'm thankful we can organize special, formalized ministries. Nonetheless, those ministries will be strongest when they are not forced to hold a weight God never designed them to bear. We don't need such ministries to be a healthy church.

Now, moving back in the direction of encouraging women's ministry, I want to affirm the goodness of providing opportunities to celebrate women becoming wives and mothers. One of the behind-the-scenes roles of the women's ministry at Mount Vernon is to ensure that engaged women and new moms have the opportunity to enjoy an edifying shower. We do not, as a church, host these showers. But the women's ministry will not only ask if a church member would like such a shower but will work, where possible, to facilitate finding a host.

Of course, I can't proof-text this particular ministry from the Bible! But the fact that there is a role for older women to encourage younger brides and moms makes this ministry of value, especially in a world that increasingly devalues the role of marriage and parenting. I don't attend these showers myself, but I regularly hear about the biblical wisdom being passed down from one generation to another, and I'm glad that the women's ministry at Mount Vernon strives to see this tradition continue.

Finally, the church as a whole can and should encourage women one-anothering each other. Most of our Women's Ministry is devoted to bringing women together to give the ladies a vision for disciple-making in the context of the local church. We want all the women of Mount Vernon to experience the joy of Christian discipleship, learn from women of different generations, and understand the role they have to play in the life of the body of Christ.

Under the guidance of the elders, the women's ministry has the ability to convene all the women of the church. Each event is the fruit of thought and prayer given by the women's ministry team and

the elders as we think about ways to encourage the women here.

To be sure, there are not many women-only gatherings, but the ones we schedule are potent. They are designed to help fold new members into the life of the church, assist all the women to know one another better, and sometimes to give unbelievers a taste of the kind of fellowship Christians can enjoy together. To encourage his disciples to serve each other, Jesus said in John 13:35, "all peoples will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." At many of our events, non-Christian women are invited to come and see what Christians talk about—what we care about. Yes, they can see this on a Sunday morning. Nonetheless, for some, this more intimate gathering of ladies becomes a wonderful introduction to the Christian life. As they see Christian women love one another, some begin to wonder what it would mean for them to be loved by God.

What events does our women's ministry host?

- *Fall Gathering* – Though late August is hardly fall, this evening event serves as the start of our women's ministry year. We hear a speaker, usually one of our elders, hand out a book, share the vision of women's ministry at Mount Vernon, and generally introduce members and visitors alike to what our life together looks like in the local church. Folding into a new church and meeting new people can be hard. This gathering is a great help.

- *Christmas Tea* – Each year in December, in anticipation of our celebration of Christ's birth, we invite our unbelieving neighbors to Mount Vernon to enjoy a delicious meal, engage in meaningful conversation, and hear a simple gospel presentation. We live in a city filled with nominal Christians—Christians in name only. They have great respect for Jesus and for the seasonal traditions, but don't know Him personally. The Christmas Tea is a winsome and clear way to challenge ladies to understand that Jesus is both Savior and Lord. He is both the reigning King and the coming Judge.

- *Winter Retreat* – This is, by far, our biggest event of the year. Over the course of two days, the women of Mount Vernon are invited to spend extended time together. We typically alternate between an on-campus and off-campus retreat. Non-members are invited to the on-campus retreat. But when we go away, we limit attendance to members of the church. These retreats are a particularly powerful way for the women of Mount Vernon to focus on establishing relationships to last a lifetime.

All three events are organized by our Women's Ministry Team. This is a team of faithful volunteers laboring throughout the year to serve the women of the church. However, our pastoral staff organizes some women's ministry, too. For example, each fall one of our Wednesday night Equipping Matters courses is taught by women for women. This year, the class will be led through the missionary Jenny Manley's book *Delighting in the Doctrine of Christ*. We also organize Covenant Groups—small groups of members—for women that begin in October and run for a whole year.

The key point to remember is that all these events are shaped by those three biblical principles: we are to shepherd one another, the elders have a unique role to shepherd the congregation as a whole, and God calls women to invest in other women.

ARE THERE ANY DANGERS TO NOTE?

Where can women's ministry in the local church go awry? We want to avoid building a "church" within a church. Do you remember how I began this article? I mentioned the woman who said she learned better from women than from men. Her Bible studies became the place where she came to be fed. We could say those studies became her "church."

I hope it's clear that I'm a strong supporter of women's Bible studies. These are appropriate venues for application specific to women to be brought up and discussed. I want these studies to exist and to thrive. However, let's be careful not to pit them against our main gathering. And if a woman had to choose, she should choose to gather with all the saints.

We are all tempted to look for community with people who are like us. It can be pleasant to meet with those who share the same gender, or who are the same age, or who have the same job. I know that I love gathering with other pastors—men who personally understand

the joys and challenges of pastoral ministry. But what I enjoy the most is gathering with the body of Christ on Sunday morning. That is my church. We are one family. This is the bullseye of my fellowship as a Christian.

As you participate in women's ministry, beware of the temptation to find all your community within the confines of that event or that small group or the relationships that you develop through this ministry. Mount Vernon is one family and that means we need to be encouraged by men and women, the young and the old, the working and the retired. Women's ministry becoming a "church" within the church is a danger we want to avoid.

We want to avoid single ladies feeling like second-class citizens in the church. As I mentioned earlier, marriages and births are to be celebrated. Local churches should be unapologetic about presenting marriage and parenting as a spiritual and social good. That means we should encourage showers, pray for these life-changes, and labor to ensure that wives and moms are being discipled into greater and greater degrees of faithfulness.

And yet, we remember the words of the apostle Paul that I referenced above. 1 Corinthians 7:8,

"To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am." Let that sink in. This is pretty amazing, isn't it? Singleness is good because it allows men and women to be unusually devoted to ministry. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:34 that the single women are "anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit." This is a good kind of anxiety.

This means that you shouldn't expect every women's event to target wives and mothers. In fact, next year's women's retreat will be led by a very godly and productive single woman by the name of Rachel Ware. Rachel is the Director of Mobilization for Reaching & Teaching International Ministries and a wonderful servant of the Lord.

What about the fact that Paul focuses on married women in Titus 2? Again, I think Paul knew that even though singleness is good, it remained common (and rightly so) for women and men to be married. He expected many elders to be married, which is why he charged them to be "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2). However, he is not prohibiting single men from serving as elders. He was single after all.

Similarly, in Titus 2, Paul acknowledges the reality that many women will be mothers, and he strives to ensure they receive the practical instruction they need to be faithful to the role to which God called them. Perhaps we could say both in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 2 Paul addresses what is very typical: marriage. But we also need to address what is very good: singleness. One danger of a women's ministry is neglecting to address the joys and challenges of singleness.

Finally, we want to avoid thinking that all women's ministry is organized. One evening Deana and I had a few folks over for dinner. We talked about a class that had been taught on suffering. One of the ladies said she found the class so helpful that she'd invited a small group of ladies to meet up to discuss it. No pastor called them together. No ministry coordinator organized that time. It was simply Christian women taking it upon themselves to think more deeply about what they had been taught. That sure looks like women's ministry to me.

Here's the point I'm trying to make: when we are committed to an Ephesians 4 kind of ministry, we should expect the saints—male and female—to find creative ways to “grow up in every way into him who is Christ” (Eph. 4:15). They don't always need the church to organize these opportunities for them. When men and women know the Bible, when they desire to be in one another's lives, they will create ministry. In fact, I think it is safe to say that the majority of good ministry at Mount Vernon is not organized.

WHAT ABOUT MEN'S MINISTRY?

If you look closely at Mount Vernon, you may notice that there are more organized events targeting women than men. Did you ever wonder why? I think we would be free to have a more robust men's ministry, but let me explain why we basically limit our men's ministry to an annual retreat.

Mount Vernon is blessed with a plurality of elders. Besides our four paid pastors, the church has elected nine more men to serve as shepherds in this flock. Though all of our shepherds are charged to pastor men and women, the reality is that they will spend a lot of time with men. For example, most all of my lunches are with men. It is good and appropriate for me as a pastor to spend time with men and encourage them to be faithful workers, husbands, and fathers. Outside of an occasional counseling situation,

I simply don't spend one-on-one time with women outside my immediate family.

This is one reason why I'm so grateful for the women's ministry at Mount Vernon. Even though such a ministry isn't required, I'm delighted for the godly women who are laboring to bring women together and even helping the elders ensure that women have opportunities to be in one-on-one relationships, too. It's not that I'm expecting the Women's Ministry Team to be a team of shepherdesses. I'm simply thankful for their efforts to help every woman at Mount Vernon to be in a discipling relationship—to be personally, regularly, and deliberately helping another woman grow in Christlikeness.

CONCLUSION

This year, as we think about biblical manhood and womanhood, it's appropriate to reflect upon the role of women's ministry in the local church.

Since coming to Mount Vernon in 2008, I have personally met with the women given responsibility for women's ministry here. It's a joy to see their labors for the spiritual good of the women in our flock and to see them so happily work under the oversight of our elders. Even if women's ministry—like men's or children's or any other ministry—isn't required, it's so, so good. I praise God for it.

In their book, *The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood*, Susan Hunt and Barbara Thompson cast a vision for Christian women making a difference in their church and the world. Christian women (like Christian men) are pilgrims: “Living and leaving the legacy of biblical womanhood demands a pilgrim perspective. Pilgrims live well and finish well. In the finishing season, a woman's legacy of relationships is intensified, and her doctrine is tested. How we finish is determined by our theology” (175).

That's my prayer for all the women at Mount Vernon. I want them to obtain the prize and one day wear that “imperishable wreath” (1 Cor. 9:24–25). I want the women of our church to be thrilled to be children of God who have been saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. I want the doctrine of past justification to be a source of unrelenting joy and the doctrine of future glorification to be a source of daily encouragement. And I don't want them (or any member of Mount Vernon, for that matter) to run the

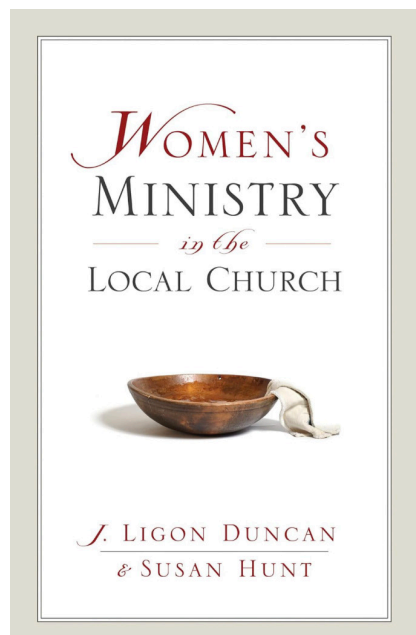
Christian race alone. For this reason, a wise women's ministry in the local church should be received as a sweet gift from a loving God.

-Aaron Menikoff

BOOK HIGHLIGHT

WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Written by J. Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt | Recommended by Jacob Salley



In *Women's Ministry in the Local Church*, authors Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt offer a winsome and well-reasoned defense of the biblical and theological foundations for women's ministry in today's evangelical churches. They begin by candidly evaluating the twenty-first century, post-Christian Western cultural climate, identifying what they call the modern "crisis of womanhood." Against this backdrop, they contend that the Bible presents not merely a better, but the best alternative way: biblical femininity, biblical womanhood, and the faithful service of Christian women in God-given roles within the local church, in harmony with the New Testament's creation-design vision.

Their framework unfolds in five simple themes drawn from Scripture. First, women's ministry should operate within the context of submission to God-ordained authority—both within the home for wives, and under the shepherding care of pastors and elders in the church. Second, it is to be a compassionate enterprise, making use of women's unique giftings to bless others—inside and outside the covenant community—through

works of mercy. Third, it ought to be community-oriented, intentionally designed to strengthen and nurture the covenant family of believers. Fourth, it should be discipleship-driven, cultivating sound doctrine and gospel hope through intentional mentoring and discipling relationships among women. Finally, it must be scriptural, grounded firmly in the witness of God's Word—especially its teaching on gender, sexuality, and complementarianism. Throughout, the authors supplement these principles with practical strategies, offering church leaders and volunteers concrete guidance for establishing a biblically faithful women's ministry in their own congregations.

Duncan's and Hunt's presentation is compelling, balanced, and timely. At a moment when few topics have generated more confusion and division in evangelical churches than the role of women in ministry, their clear commitment to Scripture—applied with nuance and conviction—is both refreshing and admirable. Combining theological depth with practical guidance, this book serves as a valuable resource principally for pastors, lay elders, women's ministry leaders, directors, coordinators, and volunteers, as well as anyone who plays a part in the design or implementation of such ministries in the local church.

BOOK EXCERPTS

Biblical womanhood is a covenantal concept. The helper design would be illogical in an autonomous vacuum. This design is nonsensical in a culture of self but is needful in a culture of covenant. The fifth-century Patriarch of Constantinople, John Chrysostom, wrote, 'If they [the husband and wife] perform their proper duties, everything around them acquires firmness and stability.' When women join together to 'perform their proper duties' as corporate helpers and life-givers in the family of God, they contribute to the firmness and stability of the Church.

– "The Need," p. 35

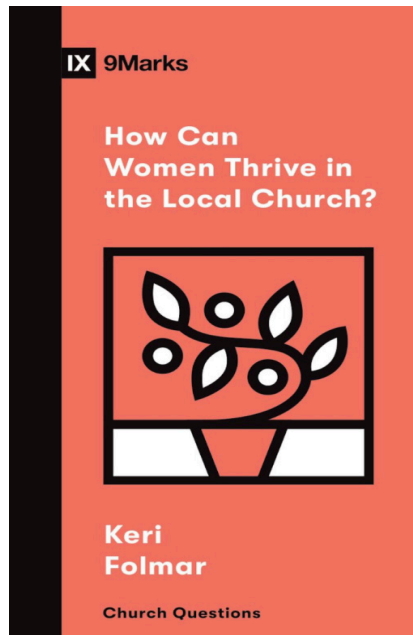
Godly women who have embraced the truth of God's creation design and redemptive calling for women are called to train other women to think and live according to biblical principles of womanhood. This is the kind of life-on-life discipleship that guides and nurtures to maturity. It is a mothering ministry.

– "Titus 2 – Discipleship," p. 124

BOOK HIGHLIGHT

HOW CAN WOMEN THRIVE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Written by Keri Folmar | Recommended by Meredith Ryder



In a culture that pushes self-love and self-help books to women, Keri Folmar invites women to the truth and provision found in Christ in her short booklet, *How Can Women Thrive in the Local Church?* The pages are filled with instruction, outlined in eight principles, on how to center our lives around Christ and the local church—the only path to thrive as a Christian woman.

Folmar begins with the gospel and the reminder that you must be attached to the vine, Christ, to thrive spiritually and be nourished by the church. If you are apathetic about gathering with the church, she encourages you to examine your heart to ensure you are in Christ (2 Cor. 13:5). Folmar emphasizes the importance of membership and covenanting together with a local church. She then highlights prioritizing the weekly corporate worship gathering as the church is shaped and edified by collectively hearing the teaching of God's Word. She asserts that to thrive, you must sit under God's Word more than you serve. It's also important to view the church as one family, where you can seek to be a mother, a sister, or a daughter, as shown in Titus 2. Because sin destroys the unity God commands of His people, she calls us to strive to be on guard and keep

short accounts. Bitterness or conflict ought not fester in the family of God. Folmar concludes by pointing to the importance of looking for and meeting the needs of the church. The life of the Christian is to be joyfully intertwined with the church family.

Are you thriving spiritually at Mount Vernon? Are you serving the church—too much or not at all? Do you need to forgive a brother or sister? Do you feel like an outsider at church? Are you too busy to prioritize the Sunday gathering or discipleship? Is jealousy or bitterness keeping you from thriving? If any of these questions resonate with you, this book would be an encouraging resource. We all have different giftings and different struggles. What may be easy for you could be the biggest hurdle for the sister sitting next to you. It is wise to be aware of this, and this booklet can serve as a helpful guide as you seek to thrive and help other women thrive in the local church.

BOOK EXCERPTS

We help others persevere on the long road of obedience by consistently gathering together. We sing, not just for ourselves, but to enliven the faith of others. As we sit under God's word, we commit to helping one another follow that word together. When we gather, we're a picture of heaven that encourages us to remain faithful as we wait for Christ's return.

– "Prioritize the Weekly Gathering," p. 21

We shouldn't compare ourselves to other women in the church. Each of us has different gifts and abilities. Each of us has varying levels of margin in our life. Some of us simply have less bandwidth than others. Don't compare your gifts or service to others, especially to those who are in a different season of life. Instead, focus on what the Lord has called you to do in your particular season

– "Look for Needs and Meet Them," p. 46–47

BIBLE READING PLAN

SEPTEMBER

TAKE UP & READ

These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message.
Take Up & Read!

September 1	Proverbs 6:1-19	September 16	Psalms 8
September 2	Psalms 15	September 17	Genesis 1:26-31
September 3	Ecclesiastes 5	September 18	Ephesians 5:25-33
September 4	Matthew 5:33-37	September 19	1 Corinthians 16:12-24
September 5	2 Thessalonians 3:6-18	September 20	Titus 2
September 6	James 5	September 21	Genesis 2:15
September 7	Proverbs 6:1-19	September 22	Genesis 2:18
September 8	Matthew 5:13-16	September 23	Genesis 2
September 9	Acts 16:16-34	September 24	Proverbs 31
September 10	John 3:16-21	September 25	Ephesians 5:22-24
September 11	Matthew 25:31-46	September 26	1 Thessalonians 2:1-8
September 12	Deuteronomy 4:1-8	September 27	Titus 2
September 13	Isaiah 58:1-12	September 28	Genesis 2:18
September 14	Matthew 5:13-16	September 29	Matthew 9:9-13
September 15	Genesis 2:15	September 30	Luke 19:1-10

*Sermons in Bold

NEW MEMBERS



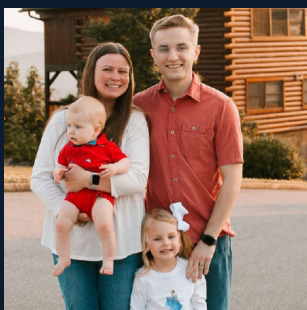
NICK & MATTIE
BRAZELTON



JESSE LAMBERT



BOB & CATHI
SELPH



ZACHARY &
MADISON SKILLING



MICHAEL & ALLY
STILLEY



IAN
WITHERSPOON

"We must grasp once again, the idea of church membership as being the membership of the body of Christ and as the biggest honour which can come a man's way in this world."

MARTIN LLYOD-JONES



MOUNT VERNON

BAPTIST CHURCH

MVBCHURCH.ORG