

## HOW TO KEEP YOUR WOMEN'S MINISTRIES ALIVE AND WELL DURING COVID-19



Many times, my husband and I would have discussions about the church and very often we would say the church is not a building. Well today with the Covid-19 lockdown in a lot of countries this is truer than ever.

If we think about Christians in the past, and even today, persecution forced them to go far and wide and during that time they were spreading the gospel. So perhaps what is happening today will force us to look at things differently. Become more creative as we find ways to connect with those around us. Church news tells us that more people than ever are following live stream services online. In fact, more people than those who come to church on any given week.

Although many people are saying how can this be? God is using this time to help us connect more intentionally with those around us. This is our moment to shine. We need to find new ways to connect with and others.

Last week I wrote an article which I shared with you called "**How to take a spiritual retreat without leaving your front door**". Because first and foremost we need that connection with God before we can share what He is doing in our lives.

This time I would like to share with you this article on how to hold a virtual Bible Study.

I read an article from a Christian news platform that there are many churches who are finding that because people have time, they are experiencing a much greater need for connection online from people who don't come to their church. This really is a time to make an impact and to "meet" new people and connect with them.



## HOW TO CONNECT

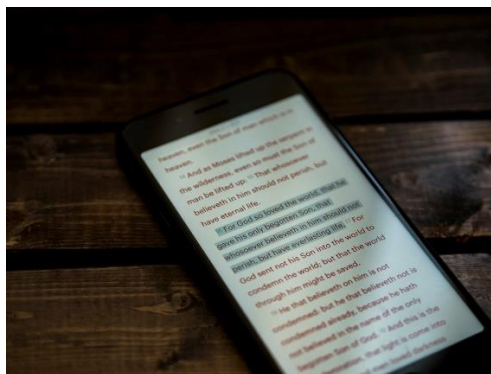
To be honest I am not a very technical person. I am not saying I have all the answers. One thing I have learnt though is that Zoom is a great connector. I have had many meetings with zoom in the past weeks. What I love is that it lets you share with others. For example, if I have a PowerPoint or clip, I can share that during the meeting with others. And it is very user friendly. If I can use it so can you.

I have heard of others that have made a What's app group or a group on Telegram. All ways to send daily messages of encouragement and prayers.

What's App is a way of talking with others face to face so to speak.

Facebook is another one I have seen a lot. There is no excuse to not connect.

Get some of your young ladies involved. They are so tech savvy these days. Let them use their gifts in this area to help you set it up and contribute with the presentations. They are very much into tech and know a lot more than us from an older generation. Do not feel you have to do everything yourself.



## BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER

Have a prayer session. At this time prayer is very important for all of us. So many people feel they need God in their lives to help them through this time. People have family and friends who are sick and struggling. We can pray for women, children and men who are in abusive relationships right now. Who have nowhere to go? Pray for your local community. Find pieces of news you can pray over. Pray for our national leaders who are faced every day with tough decisions. And say prayers of thanks because there is always something to be grateful for.

Remember the time when everyone in church went to Wednesday evening Prayer and Bible Study. Now with this pandemic it might be a great start to a revival of the Wednesday evening Prayer and Bible Study except it is online. People are more open; people have more time and people are ready to connect. We need to take advantage of this. Building bridges now for later.



## AN EXAMPLE FROM REAL LIFE

I want to share with you what Sonja Kalmbach, Women's Ministries leader in Sweden, has written to me. They have started an online Bible Study group.

I think the Bible study has worked well the two times we have had it so far. We had eight participants. The size of the group makes it possible to keep things very personal, which I really like. I think if it grows bigger than ten, it would be more difficult to get the "personal touch".

I hope we can get in touch with some of the more isolated people. This is one downside with digital meetings - the ones who would need it the most cannot manage the technical part.

We kept it to about 75 minutes - which is a good time frame for a digital meeting.

I think a midweek meeting is a good way to give the women a place to express their fears, ask questions and pray together - something that is needed in this time of insecurity. A lot of things are happening on Sabbath (live streams, Sabbath school studies online etc.), but to "touch base" midweek is a good opportunity to connect to our source of stability and hope. So overall I would say it is a positive project, let us see how it develops over time.



## **SO WHERE TO START**

Trans-European Division, Women's Ministries, resource page is a good place to start if you are looking for Bible Studies and ideas. We will be adding each week.

<https://ted.adventist.org/women-s-ministries/resources>

Start with a few friends and add as you go along. Discuss which Bible Study best suits your group. Are the people joining weathered Adventists, or is it a mixed group, is it a group of people who do not really know the Bible. Be aware of where people are in their faith journey.

And as we read in Sonja's report, do not let the group become too big as this makes personal sharing a lot more difficult. Better to start a second group.

Blessings as God opens new ways of connecting with people around us.

Clair Sanches

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