



WATFORD TOWN SDA CHURCH

Women's Ministries

Issue No 1 – January 2016

Newsletter/Digest



*“Is prayer your steering wheel, or your spare tyre?”
– Corrie ten Boom*

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Good Day from your Women's Ministries Team, Pamela, Gillian and Carrisa.

So did you make any resolutions this New Year? (Although the year is now a month old!).

I am not in the habit of making resolutions as such, usually because within a few days, or weeks at the most, I have broken them and then I “beat” myself up for a few more days, because I have failed.

I thought about the making of resolutions this year. Why do we expect to make 180 degree turn in behaviour to either do more or less of something? I am the same person I was yesterday; the passing of a minute does not change that. Yes, I know that by the grace of God much can be accomplished and miracles do happen.

However, the desire is never quite enough, and for many this leads to failure and then as I said the inevitable “beating” one-self up.

Well I know that are aspects of my life and lifestyle I would like to change. I have decided that desire is not enough. I do need to pray and ask God for His grace to give me the strength to change. I need to have an action plan. Make it concrete. Make a commitment; and if I do better today than I did yesterday (more of something or less of something depending on what I want to accomplish) then I am keeping my resolution.

If I fall (and I will) – go to God in prayer; ask for strength and MOVE ON. Don't let one mistake derail the whole plan. So many times I said “I'm no good” but this time I will admit my human frailty, and not allow that the colour my future.

So my sisters, it's not too late; yes a new year is good time to try reformation – however Spring is also full of promise as nature brings forth her blooms and renewal is in the air. Also resolutions can be made at any time, don't wait for tomorrow, if there's something you need to change consider how you might go about it and make a plan, and move forward.

Wishing you all the very best for 2016, as we move forward together sharing the good news of salvation with those who are seeking answers. Enjoy our offering for this month, Pam and the Women's Ministries Team (Gillian and Carrisa)

Pray this month

I want to be made whole.
Perfect and complete,
Fit to contain your love,
Clean enough to pass it on,
Unsullied, unstained,
Untainted by my need for gratitude and praise.
To pour out your love,
As you've poured it over me.

Help me to accept myself
As you have accepted me.
Just as I am.
To rejoice in my gifts,
The gifts you have given me:
To share them,
Not hug them to myself.
They are all yours.
Live in me and create something wonderful,
Something full of wonder; awe and love –
Connected to all you have created.

Take my incompleteness into your completeness,
My struggles into your peace,
My weakness into your strength
My fears into your security,
My doubts into your certainty,
My life into your infinity,
Amen.



My Word for the Year

A life lesson from my junk drawer

Sherry Surratt

January always inspires me to do a little clean up. I rid the fridge and cupboards of junk food (or “fake food” as my friend Gretchen calls it), and I attack the hall closet, also known as the cemetery for misfit coats, gloves, and boots that have divorced their mates.

In an ambitious wave of energy this year, I even tackled that drawer in the kitchen. You know the one. It’s overflowing with ballpoint pens, useless receipts, empty Scotch tape dispensers, and that wad of rubber bands that have no purpose.

As I surveyed all manner of nonsense dumped in this drawer, it brought a new yearning. Secretly, I want 2016 to be *The Year of the Tidy Drawer*, but in my heart, I know organising closets and drawers won’t bring significant change. There must be more.

Choosing My Word for the New Year

I’m smack in the middle of reading *The Gratitude Diaries* by Janice Kaplan, and within the first few chapters the author shares her desire to *think* differently and *be* different. She caught my attention with the statement, “I don’t want to just acknowledge what’s good today. I want my gratitude to transform me for the future.”

That’s when my word for the year presented itself. Every January I choose a framing word that will be my focus for the year ahead, and I suddenly knew what it would be: *gratitude*.

As Kaplan pointed out, gratitude is different than momentary thankfulness. It’s deep. It’s transforming. It changes the way you look at your family, your stuff, and yourself. Cleaning and tidying up is great, but I want lasting, significant change. I want to be intentional with my thoughts, and I want to have the presence to appreciate what I have today, where I am today, and to the people I get to share today with.

I realised this was what I wanted for 2016, even more than healthy eating habits and an organised kitchen. I want to appreciate the moments, *this moment*, and see with new eyes the good things I already have. Each day is precious, but only if we allow ourselves to live in it.

Finding God's Presence Through Gratitude

I sat down yesterday and started a list of all the good in my life. I have a family that loves me. I have a church that ushers me into the presence of God every weekend. I have friends who make me laugh and bring out the best in me. As I continued with my list, I could feel a holy presence. It is God who engineers all that is good and allows me to experience it.

My mind wandered to things that had been hard over the past year. I had allowed attitudes of selfishness and discontent to slip into my life. Just like the sundry items in the kitchen drawer, they had piled up and gotten in the way. But it occurred to me that God had worked good even through my junk. He wooed me, patiently whispered to me, allowing me to see how I could grow. Taking just a few minutes to let true gratitude seep in helped me reframe how I felt about growth, even in the painful moments.

Journaling My Way to Change

So how do you build an attitude of gratitude? I'm taking a simple suggestion from Kaplan and beginning with a gratitude journal. Every night before I close my eyes, I'm taking just a few minutes to jot down three things about my day that brought me joy, a sense of satisfaction, or even just a smile. I savoured a really good drink. I received a hug when I walked through the office door. I heard a baby belly laugh. Then I whisper thanks to the God who brought these good things my way.

While gratitude is my theme for this year, here's my heart's prayer for 2016:

Oh God, transform my mind with a holy gratitude that forever changes me. Give me new eyes to see not only what you have given me but also what you are doing around me and in me. Let a true spirit of thankfulness overwhelm me, even during the hard moments. Teach me to see your good in every day. Amen.



Sherry Surratt is the CEO and President of MOPS International. Connect with her online at SherrySurratt.com or follow her on Twitter at [@SherrySurratt](https://twitter.com/SherrySurratt).

Ladies only pyjama party Friday night at the church: Israel Field (IF)

[Tel Aviv] Friday night was carefully marked on the calendars of women members of the Seventh-day Adventist International Church in Tel Aviv. The evening began as a typical Friday evening church service, with singing, prayer, welcome remarks by the WM church leader, Gina Gonzales, and the introduction of guest speaker, Mrs. Mila Mendez. But if you looked closely, the clock read 9:00 PM and the women wore pyjamas. They planned to spend the night at church!

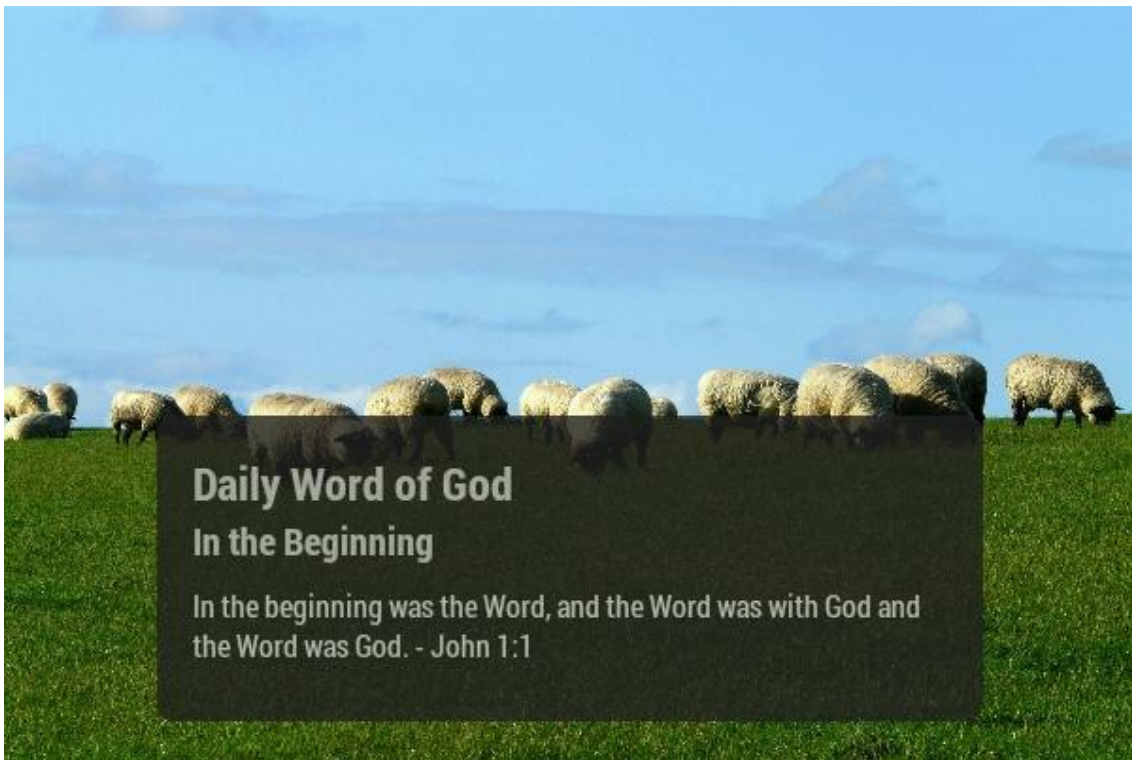
The themes of the night (literally, the night) were communication in relationships and cultivating friendships with each other. After the presentation and a group activity led by Mrs. Mendez, the ladies enjoyed a midnight snack. They gathered again at 3:00 AM for commitment prayer led by Pastor Julio Mendez. They viewed the film, "Passion of the Christ," and discussed it afterwards.



They learned some insights that night. When women share about their personal relationships to God, whether it be struggles or victories, they enjoy deeper camaraderie with one another. This leads to breaking barriers and building bonds. Forging deeper friendship helps unite them as sisters in Christ and as servants in the Lord's vineyard.

Have you ever considered the advantage of a Friday night pyjama party at the church? After breakfast is served, everyone is ready and on time for Sabbath School.

Contributed by Nina Usachev, IF WM director



Daily Word of God

In the Beginning

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. - John 1:1

In the Beginning

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. - John 1:1

Life is full of beginnings. We are now at the beginning of a year. But here is a beginning that carries our thoughts back beyond all years, all dates of history, all imaginable periods of time, beyond the beginnings of creation. Then Christ was. What a sublime stretch of being these words give to Him who is our Saviour! We cannot grasp the thought, but we can find security and comfort in it when we think of Christ, and when we rest in Him as our hope and salvation. We trust in human friends, and the comfort is very sweet; yet we can never forget that they are but creatures of a day, and that we cannot be sure of having them even for tomorrow. But we trust in Christ, and know that from eternity to eternity He is the same, and therefore our confidence is forever strong and sure.

Our trust is still more stable and firm when we read on and find who this Person is in whom we are confiding. "The Word was God." There is nothing doubtful in this language. No kind of exegesis can blot from this brief clause the truth of Christ's divinity. The Saviour, into whose hands you have committed your life, is the eternal God. Earthly trusts are never secure, for everything human is mortal; but those who commit themselves to the keeping of Christ are safe forever. It is very sweet to think of Christ's humanity. It brings Him near to us. He is like one of ourselves. He is our own brother, with tender sympathies and warm affections. We study the gospel and learn the graciousness of His character as seen in His compassion, His tears, His love. Then when we know that behind these qualities are the divine attributes, that He is very God, what glorious confidence it gives us! Let us set this glorious truth at the gate of the New Year. It is a shining point from which to start.

"Come and hear the grand old story,
Story of the ages past:
All earth's annals far surpassing.
Story that shall ever last.

Hear we then the grand old story.
True as God's all faithful word;
Best our tidings to the guilty
Of a dead and risen lord.

Christ, the Father's Son eternal.
Once was born the son of man;
He who never knows the beginning
Here on earth a life began ...

Hear we then the grand old story.
And in listening learn the love
Flowing through it to the guilty
From our pardoning God above.

30 Days to Finding the Freedom of Forgiveness:

By Steve Johnson – executive director for Insight for Living Canada

Living in a fallen world of people where we all sin and have been sinned against means we all need forgiveness and to grant forgiveness. Although they are not always easy tasks, doing so is worthwhile bringing freedom and blessing

- Day 1** God is holy, Habakkuk wrote, “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing” 1:13 But we’re all sinners. What are the consequences of your sin being a barrier between God and you?
- Day 2** Because of His holiness God reacts to sin with wrath Roman 1:18. Unless the sin is removed or covered God must punish the sinner. When you are hurt or offended how do you react?
- Day 3** Forgiveness is the act of releasing an offence and reconciling with your offender. God does this for you through Jesus death (Romans 3:23-26). How does Christ’s death atone (cover) your sin?
- Day 4** One biblical image of forgiveness is covering sin, putting it out of sight, blotting it out (Psalm 32:1; 51:9) How does this imagery change how you view your offender?
- Day 5** God delights to show mercy. The biblical imagery Micah 7:18,19 describes is God’s forgiveness casting our sin into depth of the sea. What does this teach you about the finality of His forgiveness?
- Day 6** According to Psalm 51 (verses 2, 7, and 10) what is the biblical image used to convey forgiveness? Ponder this: In Exodus 12:22 hyssop was used to apply the blood to doorposts.
- Day 7** In the New Testament, forgiveness is described as cancelling a debt (Matt 6:12; II Cor 5:19) Jesus’ death provided for your sin, but who pays the debt if you reject Christ?
- Day 8** According to Acts 3:19 and I John 1:9 what must you do to receive payment for your sin and God’s forgiveness
- Day 9** God is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” (Exodus 34:6). How does the word “abounding” characterise how God forgives?
- Day 10** How does the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) portray God’s lavish forgiveness for repentant sinners? How is that a model for you forgiveness?
- Day 11** In what way does the story of the prodigal son portray God’s heart and the restoration for sinners?
- Day 12** Matt 18:21-35 say you should be ready to forgive no matter what, but reconciliation requires the offender to be accountable for his offence. What are the ways you can forgive an unrepentant offender?
- Day 13** Repentance precedes reconciliation. Once the offender repents the relationship can be restored and fellowship enjoyed. Why is it sinful to not forgive someone who is repentant?
- Day 14** In some cases reconciliation isn’t wise due to the nature of the offence or isn’t possible due to death. What are the ways you can experience forgiveness without having the closure of reconciliation?
- Day 15** Matt 6:14 says, “If you forgive people their sins, your Father in heaven will forgive your sins also” (NLT). What is the connection between forgiving others and God’s forgiveness in Matt 6:15?
- Day 16** You can’t receive forgiveness without acknowledging your need for it. How can you extend forgiveness without admitting that because of your own imperfect condition you have no right to withhold forgiveness from anyone else?

Day 17

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins”(1 Peter 4:8). Forgiveness is the very essence of your faith – how should this characterise your life?

Day 18

Colossians 3:13 says, “Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” Forgiving is a deliberate choice not based on emotions. Who in your life are you holding back from forgiving because of hurt feelings?

Day 19

Emotions are a response to what you do or think so shouldn't influence your decisions. Why is a deliberate choice to forgive and to continue forgiving essential to emotional wellbeing?

Day 20

God loves you as well as those who hurt you. How can remembering God loves your offender so much He died for him or her help you find forgiveness?

Day 21

Read Romans 8:28. Even offences are included in the “all things” allowed by God in His sovereign plan for your good. What good purpose can being hurt and extending forgiveness achieve?

Day 22

In John 20:22,23 Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit!” His next instruction was about forgiving people. What is the connection?

Day 23

If the Spirit of Jesus who forgave all your sins lives in and through you, how will living under His influence daily enable you to forgive others?

Day 24

People think some offences are impossible to forgive. How should Jesus' words “With God all things are possible” (Matt 19:26) impact your dependence on God to help you forgive?

Day 25

People often repeat their offences. What, according to Jesus in Matt 18:21-22, is the limit to how many times should you forgive the offender?

Day 26

Forgiveness is hindered when you dwell on hurts. How would committing yourself to letting go after choosing to forgive help you heal?

Day 27

According to Hebrews 12:14-15 what damage can you cause to yourself and other by harbouring unforgiveness in your heart?

Day 28

Esau forgave Jacob (Gen 33:4); Joseph forgave his 10 brothers (Gen 50:19,20); Jesus sought forgiveness for those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34). How do these show you nothing is unforgivable?

Day 29

Healing from hurts comes when you forgive and then pray for your offenders. Prayer helps complete the act of forgiving. What will prayer do for your heart?

Day 30

Emotional healing requires the decision to forgive, the commitment to not dwell on it, prayer and time. What is holding you back from moving forward and committing to forgive?



“And be ye kind one to another,
tenderhearted, forgiving one
another, even as God for Christ's
sake hath forgiven you.”

Ephesians 4:32 (KJV)

©2014 Jesus Walks Online.org



The Single Issue

*Are you single? Are you always being questioned about when you are going to get married? Are you separated or divorced and now feel that you just do not 'fit'? Have you taken a conscious decision to be single and celibate? **Angela Purkiss** takes us on a journey to examine and challenge the attitudes and ideas on the subject of being single.*

In the 1990's statistics told us that approximately 33% of the population of Britain lived alone. Some long-term predictions suggest that by 2025 as many as 50% of the population will be living alone. A survey by the Evangelical Alliance in the 1990's recorded similar numbers of single people attending Christian churches nationwide. Figures from the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Britain also demonstrate similar levels of single people within our congregations.

What conclusions can we draw from this information? If a third of our church membership is single, isn't it a simple deduction that two thirds are not? Are single people simply those who have not yet found a partner, those who are suffering from low self-esteem? Should we see them as different with real and varied needs? What exactly is 'The Single Issue?'

A single person can be any age or at any stage in their life. We tend to see single people as those who have never been married. Increasingly however, our churches must recognise that included in this group are those who were once married and have lost their spouse by death, divorce or separation.

Attitudes to singleness in Society

In a recent article in the Observer Newspaper, Neasa MacErlean writes, "we are in the midst of a huge increase in housing demand by single people..... All the demographic and social trends are pointing this way – greater longevity; the postponement of marriage; the greater acceptability of being single and childless; higher divorce rates; a greater acceptance of gays and lesbians; and rising standards of living.

Society is beginning to accept a move away from the traditional and accepted living patterns. As such, policy makers are taking into consideration the social trends that influence policies, for example in determining housing needs and health care provisions.

Attitudes to singleness in the Church

For many, singleness is seen as the stage before 'settling down'. This has been the case for generations as traditionally young people would either pursue higher education or find suitable employment before getting married. This view is widely held both in the Church and in society.

Whilst it has become acceptable for people to co-habit or form gay and lesbian relationships in society, the Christian Church has largely remained true to the Biblical principles that such lifestyle choices are not in keeping with the laws of God.

Singleness and celibacy do however find favour in the Bible. Sadly, however, for the single person within the church, this is very rarely the case. Singleness is acceptable if caused by bereavement and

may be tolerated by some in the case of divorce, but many see the single person over thirty as something of a misfit. Where I live our church is currently engaged in the very important work of supporting the family, be it by pre-marital counselling, crisis management where necessary and various ministries aimed at different parts of our church family. Currently, this does not include a nationwide ministry for single people.

Initiatives undertaken by Family Ministries leaders have frequently met with opposition and little success. Some of the reasons for this include a lack of confidence in the ability of a married person to plan a relevant programme for the needs of single people.

Biblical perspectives

As Christians, our study of the life of Christ can quite reasonably focus on His healing ministry, His preaching and teaching, His strength and humility in the face of adversity and many other areas of His life. How many times however do we see Jesus as a single man over the age of thirty in a culture where people tended to marry in their teenage years? A man who interacted freely with males and females but never had a personal intimate relationship with a member of the opposite sex? However, this was the reality. Jesus was like one of us. He knew the same feelings of loneliness and isolation, He “understands our weaknesses, since He had the same temptations we do, though He never once gave away to them and sinned” (Hebrews 4:15 Living Bible).

In Matthew 19:11-12, Jesus accepts that the concept of remaining single would not be palatable to everyone, but that those who could accept it should accept it. Singleness therefore, is not a consolation prize, a state to be pitied but a valid alternative.

The Living Bible paraphrases the familiar words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:7 like this: “I wish everyone could get along without marrying, just as I do. But we are not all the same. God gives some the gift of a husband or wife, and others he gives the gift of being able to stay happily married.”

Just as Jesus and Paul who were single men and Anna the prophetess, who was widowed after only seven years of marriage, fulfilled the plan that God had for their lives, so too can single people today. As our churches welcome individuals from different backgrounds, both married and single, our emphasis should be on fulfilling goals, finishing our “course” and building the most important relationship of all, with Jesus Christ.

A ministry for singles?

Someone once commented, “I do not see you as single”, to which my response was, “Then how do you see me?” Sometimes in an attempt to put singleness into perspective within our churches, members choose to ignore singleness as an issue and by so doing, deny the very real and varied needs of single people.

Singleness is not a disease. There are millions of single adults in the world and many will remain that way. These people face the same struggles and pressures as married people, but also some very different challenges. In order for us to cater adequately for the needs of each group, honest and open discussion of the similarities and differences needs to take place.

Frequently we hear different groups within the church making the statement, “the Church should.....” before outlining a particular grievance. It is important that as a Church, we recognise the need for a culture change.

In the Christian context, the single, celibate lifestyle is a valid alternative and should be respected by the church and individuals who may have made different lifestyle choices.

Single people are significant and the church should harness their individual abilities.

Single people do need a ministry run by single people to address their specific needs. Marriage does not make an individual complete, wholeness and completeness only come from God.

Our journey through life will take us through many experiences. For some, that will include marriage; for others it will not. When we come to God, we bring our different fears, hopes, dreams and aspirations. Married or single, we come to Him individually.

Both married and single states are gifts from God given to enhance our service to others and to Him.

“He has showed you, O man what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8 RSV) – That is the **single** issue.



FORTH COMING EVENTS:

ONE is a WHOLE NUMBER
Completeness in Christ – Celebrating the Journey

DATE: Sunday, 24 April 2016
VENUE: Stratford Manor, Warwick Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 0PY
COST: £30
REGISTRATION: 9.15am
PROGRAMME: 10.00am – 5.00pm

Featuring Workshops on SINGLES:

- never married
- divorced
- preparing for marriage
- single parents
- separated
- widowed
- with a disability

Presentations include:

- ❖ Do YOU want to be made *WHOLE?*
- ❖ The Purposeful Single Woman
- ❖ 'While I Wait...'

Presentations include:

- ❖ Do YOU want to be made *WHOLE?*
- ❖ The Purposeful Single Woman
- ❖ 'While I Wait...'

CLOSING DATE FOR REGISTRATION & PAYMENT: WEDNESDAY, 6 APRIL.
Contact Dawn Tompkins at the British Union Conference, Tel: 01923 672251, Email: dtompkins@adventist.org.uk

You may feel:

- ambitious
- available
- broken
- blessed
- liberated
- lonely
- empowered
- empty
- full
- hopeful
- despondent
- insecure
- independent

BUC EVENT: 24th April – see details to left and on church notice board.

Singleness in all its various guises – Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire

£30 includes materials and refreshments.



SEC EVENT: 27-29th May – see details below and on church notice board.

Women’s Ministries Retreat – Women Inspiring Women - Selsdon Park Hotel & Golf Club – South Croydon Surrey

Single Occupancy Room: £156;

Twin Sharing Room: £136 (between two -£68 each)

SEC Women's Ministries Retreat

Launch of the Women of Virtue Programme

Women Inspiring Women

Friday 27th May to Sunday 29th May 2016

****DETAILS OF EACH EVENT ARE ON THE RELEVANT WEBSITES, PLEASE GO THERE FOR BOOKING FORMS AND FURTHER DETAILS****

Women's Ministries evangelistic reaping series in Togo

West-Central Africa Division (WAD) – Reported by Omobonike Sessou, WAD WM director



[Togo] Women's Ministries of the Anfame church in Togo Mission organized small groups in early 2015 to invite neighbors to learn about emotional well-being and family life using the GC WM resource, *Homes of Hope and Healing*. In June 2015, the women organized an evangelistic reaping series which resulted in the baptism of 9 precious souls. Women are continuing with additional follow-up work.



FRIENDSHIP: GOD'S GIFT TO BLESS OUR LIVES.

What It Means In Our Relationships With Others And With God



What kinds of blessings do people miss because they don't have close friends? What blessings come when you and I do have close friends? *A quotation I found:*

LIFE IS TO BE FORTIFIED BY MANY FRIENDSHIPS. TO LOVE, AND TO BE LOVED, IS THE GREATEST HAPPINESS OF EXISTENCE. — Sydney Smith

But...have you ever been lonely and longed for a friend and did not know how to make friends? We know that all the blessings come from God and he gives principles He uses to guide our lives...

Desire of the Ages, p. 148. "But the gifts of Jesus are ever fresh and new. The feast that He provides for the soul never fails to give satisfaction and joy. Each new gift increases the capacity of the receiver to appreciate and enjoy the blessings of the Lord. He gives grace for grace. There can be no failure of supply. If you abide in Him, the fact that you receive a rich gift today insures the reception of a richer gift tomorrow. The words of Jesus to Nathanael express the law of God's dealing with the children of faith. With every fresh revelation of His love, He declares to the receptive heart, 'Believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.' John 1:50."



Friendships between women begin when we are little girls. Girls play with their mothers and pretend they are "best friends." Childhood and youth are spent striving to find and keep a "best friend." There are many factors present during childhood and youth that assist us in developing and maintaining friendships. The school classroom environment places us in contact with people in our own age group.

At academy and college, in boarding schools, we are placed in intimate contact

with people our own age and generally with people who share like interests. However, in our mobile society, and in the normal process of growth and development, many of us move away from our parents' home and our family support system.

- Jobs take us away from our friendship circles.
- Our lives become busy with making a living, building our own families, and we find less and less time to cultivate friendships....
- We also find fewer people who share like beliefs, and like interests.
- If we are married, our best friend then must have a spouse who is compatible with our spouse.



Researchers indicate that becoming a friend is a skill, which can be learned, and that it has to do with a person's ability to love, to be loved, and to communicate love!

The Bible tells us that God is love. It tells us that God's greatest desire is to teach us how much He loves us. The Bible is God's record of how He has tried to make that love known to us, hoping that in turn we would respond by loving and trusting Him. It goes further to say that when we know God,

we will be like Him. He is love! When we are love, others will be attracted to us, we will have friends, more than that, we will be able to make friends for God!

2 Corinthians 5:17-19: "Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into His friends and gave us the task of making others His friends also. Our message is that God was making all human beings His friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and He has given us the message which tells how He makes them His friends." *Today's English Version, ABS.*

Three principles for building friendships were found in several books on friendship, *Making Friends*, by Em Griffin and *The Friendship Factor*, by Alan L. McGinnis. Both authors developed a model for building friendships based on the principle of John 15:15, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I have learned from my Father I have made known to you." From this verse, it appears that even though friendship seems illusive at times, for the Christian, it is not an option, it is the highest calling! Jesus upgraded our relationship with Him. We are no longer servants—but friends!

1. Communicate warmth
2. Assign a top priority to your friendship
3. Create openness in your friendship



Close friendships do not "Just Happen." When friendships develop, it is because we recognise their importance and devote ourselves to them. Close friendships can grow for those who assign them enough importance to cultivate them. It takes TIME to develop a relationship with our friends. And, it takes time to develop a relationship with God. We need to spend time with those who matter most.

God created an open relationship with us. He has made known all of heaven to us. He wants us to know Him. John 17:3 says that it is, "eternal life to know God." John 1:17,18 says that Jesus came to make God known. The whole plan of salvation is a plan to restore friendship between God and man by winning man's love and trust.

If you want to deepen your friendships with another—a friend, your spouse, or with God, create openness in your relationship.

From By Lou Blanchfield: Friendship: *God's Gift to Bless our Lives* seminar for GCWM



So - we come to the end of this month's collection - a selection of articles which we hope is thought provoking.

We would really welcome submissions from you ladies - anything you have come across and would like to share, would be welcome. Any comments, feedback, suggestions gratefully received. Articles don't need to be original material, although we would welcome that as well.

We want to bring back our Profiles of Ladies of Watford Town Church - but we need willing participants We see each other from week to week - but how much do we really know about each other? If you are approached for a profile, please do consider it positively, and hopefully next month we can restore this feature.

We would welcome any graphics from budding artists - this is your newsletter, so please, feel free to offer up submissions.

Please send to: watfordtownwm@gmail.com and it will be included in forth-coming editions.

So once again time is speeding by, it was just the other day we were welcoming the New Year and passed out New Year greetings; however, January is over and we march forward into February, often regarded as the month of Love, due of course to Valentine's Day.

I believe we should all demonstrate love, in practical ways, in our every day-to-day life, for God is Love - and if we declare to love the Lord, how can we do differently? It's nice to acknowledge someone who is especially close to you, we all blossom under care and consideration, kindness and generosity; so think of ways to spread the good feeling further aboard to neighbours, friends, work colleagues and passers-by. You never know, a cheery smile as you pass by, a kind greeting, a thoughtful gesture may make someone's day and soften their own hearts, and in turn be passed on.

By time the next issue comes out Valentine's day will have passed - by we wish you Love for then.

*Please remember that this coming Sabbath, 6th February is also: **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation** so if we can have a prayer in our hearts and worship that would be good.*

Please do listen our for annoucements about our programme of local events from the Women's Ministries Team - we have been planning and hope that you will enjoy what we have put together.

With best wishes for February and the months to come -

Carrisa, Gillian and Pam