

Heart-to-Heart: Women of the Word



You are holding the new 2006-2007 Women's Ministry Bible study resource of which we are very proud. The Beatitudes are probably some of the most favored and memorized passages from God's Word...right up there with the 23rd Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments! The words have been cross-stitched and framed, songs written using these words, and innumerable sermons and Bible studies prepared focusing upon these precious words. Cumberland Presbyterian Women's Ministry will now have these words as our theme for the coming year.

This year's writer comes well-equipped to help us open up God's Word and learn from it. *Geneva Searcy* is an active member of St. Luke Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Ft. Worth, Texas. She is a teacher of an adult Sunday school class, sings in the choir, plays hand bells, and is a newly ordained elder. She and her husband Jim are parents of two grown children and the proud grandparents of three grandchildren (with one on the way!). Geneva has been active in Women's Ministry for years serving in many leadership capacities, on local and regional levels. She is also a certified teacher in the Bethel Bible Series. Many churches participate in the Bethel Bible Series, which covers the entire Bible in two years. Geneva's email address is gsearcy@earthlink.net. We know that you will be enriched and challenged as you uncover God's Word for you in these studies.

Also included in this resource are programs for two very important times of our church year – Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter. *Deanna Phelps* is the writer of these two unique programs. Deanna is a member of Christ Church of Monrovia in Huntsville, Alabama, where her husband, Bob is pastor and where she serves as Director of Christian Education and Music. She also teaches elementary children in Sunday School and CPYF. She teaches piano in her spare time. She and Bob have two grown sons. Her e-mail address is christchurch@knology.net or dphelps@knology.net. We hope you enjoy these seasonal resources and will find them useful in your Women's Ministry group.

How to Use this Resource:

These Bible studies and programs are about 45 minutes in length, depending upon how the leader structures the time. Unlike past Women's Ministry resources, these studies are best when presented in sequential order, following the Beatitude scripture text of Matthew 5:3-12. The background text is provided for the leader to help prepare a brief presentation. You're encouraged to not "read" the background text, but rather let it come to life through you and your leadership. In order to draw out comments and insights from everyone in class, suggestions are given for conversation in pairs or small groups. Even though your group may be small (5 or 6 people), you are encouraged to discuss part of the questions provided in pairs. This will give EVERYONE an opportunity to share her thoughts even if it is only with a partner.

There are several devotionals offered this year as part of the resource. The devotional writers are *Debbie Cox, Melissa Reid Goodloe, Mary Long, Ellie Miller, Peggy Nottingham, Michelle Rackley, Wakana Suzuki, and Margie Vanderlaan*. All of the devotionals are focused upon the theme of how God's Word has enriched these women's lives. For those groups who may not utilize a full, complete Bible study, it is hoped that these devotionals will meet your needs and will complement the theme for this year. In addition, you are encouraged to find other women within your church that might be willing to give a devotion along this theme.

Bible Study Resources

William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Volume I, (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1956) C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1953).

M. Eugene Boring, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Volume VIII, (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1995)

Douglas R. A. Hare, *Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Preaching, Matthew*, (Louisville, John Knox Press, 1993)

George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans, 1974)

Herbert Lockyer, Sr., General Editor, *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, Tennessee, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986)

J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship*, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1990).

John R. W. Stott, *Christian Counter-Culture: The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, (Downers Grove, Illinois, Intervarsity Press, 1978).

