

Meeting 11 — Navigating Through Ministry: Women in the Workplace (Up to 90 minutes)



**women
thriving
in ministry**
AN INITIATIVE OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Gathering Time—5 minutes

- As people join the meeting, welcome them and create a place of hospitality. When all have arrived, open your time in prayer.

Conversation Starter—5 minutes

- Who is the first female pastor you knew? What impression of women serving in pastoral ministry did you have growing up?

Sharing—Flourishing in Ministry—50-55 minutes

Homework before: Please watch the video below and spend some time in prayerful reflection and journaling:

As in the previous session, you may choose to watch just one set, or both!

Set 1 - Filmed by Cohort 1 mentors, 2021

Women in the Workplace: [Navigating Through Ministry -Women in the Workplace](#) (29 min)

Set 2 - Filmed by Cohort 2 mentors, 2022

Women in the Workplace: [Navigating Through Ministry: Women in the Workplace](#) (39 min)

After watching, please spend some time journaling or considering the following questions:

- What did you appreciate about hearing the mentors share from their experience as women serving in pastoral ministry?
- Was there anything shared that particularly resounded with your experience as a woman serving in pastoral ministry?
- What questions came up for you as you considered the experiences shared by the mentors that are aspects of being women serving in pastoral ministry?
- Is there anything that came up in your reflections to which you want to give further consideration?
- Are there any action steps that you feel compelled to take in response to this reflection?

To the Mentor: Please share these questions with your mentees and ask them to watch the video(s) and spend some time in prayerful reflection prior to your meeting. We hope that you can do the same. Mentees will share some of their reflections in 3 rounds of 3 minutes each in a Holy Listening Exercise. View the instructions on the document “Wholly, Holy Listening.” (Page 4). Keep this in mind: Feel free to use silence before and after sharing rounds. For the first round, you’ll ask

mentees to share about their experience or one (or more) of their intentions following their reflection. Let them know in advance that there will be no cross talking while people are sharing and to lean into good listening. Use a timer. While deeper guidance is on the document, here is what the three rounds will include:

- The first round is for sharing what has come up for them in their reflection
- The second round is for going deeper in what has come up for them OR for sharing a question that they want to ask about someone else's sharing
- The third round is for sharing another reflection OR a gratitude for the sharing time

The final two elements of the handout include closing in prayer. We encourage inviting that during the Closing Prayer section below.

Inviting Responses—15 minutes

- There are many different tensions in being a woman in our contemporary American church context. Work/life tensions, family responsibilities, theological conflicts, inherent biases for women in leadership, growing in pastoral identity and authenticity, among others. Some things we need to hold on to, and some things we need to let go of.
 - Can you think of something you need to let go of?
 - What would you like to hold on to?
- Share the reading, "Blessing the Ordinary" from Jan Richardson's book *Circle of Grace* (Pg 3)
 - Giving and receiving blessing is an aspect of ministry. Ministry is the place where we interact with the work of Christ and isn't just for a special group of credentialed people (or for just men). Ask one person to read the blessing.
 - What stands out to you from this blessing?
- If you were to create a blessing for other women who are discerning or walking a path of ministry, what would you include? (Have someone write this down...perhaps it could shared at a later date or with the whole group.)
- Confirm next meeting time.
- Is there anything that you've wanted to say that you've not said yet?
- In a word or phrase, what are you thinking or feeling about being a woman serving in ministry?

Closing Prayer—5 minutes

Remind them of the Group Commitments, one being prayer for one another. Are there any updates or new prayer concerns within this group? Share them now. Ask each person to pray for another person. Agree upon those prior to praying.

Blessing the Ordinary

Jan Richardson

Let these words lay themselves
like a blessing upon your head,
your shoulders,
as if, like hands,
they could pass on to you
what you most need for this day,
as if they could anoint you
not merely for the path ahead
but for this ordinary moment
that opens itself to you---
Opens itself like another hand
that unfurls itself,
that reaches out
to gather these words
in the bowl of its palm.
You may think this blessing lives
within these words.
But I tell you
it lives within the opening
and in the reaching; i
it lives in the ache
where this blessing begins;
it lives in the hollow
made by the places
where the hands
of this blessing meet.

Wholly, Holy LISTENING

The Art of Deep, Spiritual Listening

Adapted by Ann Starrette from a program on The Spiritual exercises of Saint Ignatius

A format for creating space and opening hearts to hear the wisdom of the Holy Spirit

SHARING: 3 minutes each (adjust time depending on number of people and time available)

FIRST ROUND: Leader begins sharing (based on the topic provided) — followed by others. Leader will keep time allowing each person 3 minutes per round as others listen without interruption.

SECOND ROUND: When all have shared, leader opens the floor again for 3 minutes to elaborate on what they have shared or comment/ask a question on another person's sharing as others listen without interruption.

THIRD ROUND: One last time, the floor is open for 3 minutes each sharing one grace received from the time together and any sense of God's invitation moving forward.

Leader invites circle members to pray a short prayer for the person on their right (either aloud or silently) — or the leader invites people to partner up and pray for each other (again, either aloud or silently).

Leader closes the Holy Listening circle, inviting all to recommit to confidentiality and accountability as we move back into the world.