

4 Things All Women Need to Thrive in Ministry

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When we hear the word “ministry,” we often think it refers to specific roles, such as a pastor or deacon in the church, or missionary work. We can often dismiss the term as not relevant to ourselves if we do not work within the church or another Gospel-oriented organization.

Yet, ministry has a much broader meaning. For all of us as Christians and as women, ministry simply means living out our faith in service to God and others. Ministry comes in many forms and a wide range of activities.

Here are four things that you, as a woman, need to thrive in ministry.

1. Perspective on Your Calling

To thrive in ministry, you need a call.

You may read the sentence above and immediately sense doubt or a lack of confidence. There are two problems many of us encounter when we read the word “calling.” The first problem is associated with the specifics of a call. Some of you will immediately be thinking, “I don’t have a calling.” Or “I don’t know what my calling is.”

The second problem is that even when we know we have a specific calling; we tend to measure our worth by how important or impressive that calling seems. Focusing on these problems can stop us from flourishing in the ministry.

First, we need to recognize we have all been called. God has called you to have faith in him. This is your call to the ministry.

As [2 Thessalonians 2:13-14](#) says: “God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation — a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your

belief in the truth. *He called you to salvation* when we told you the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (emphasis added).

In Isaiah, we see God’s calling to the people of Israel: “I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen you and have not rejected you” ([Isaiah 41:9](#)).

Then we see God’s calling to us through Jesus Christ: “Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest” ([Hebrews 3:1](#)).

As The Message puts it “God picked you out as his from the very start.” When you and I responded to God’s invitation — His calling — to believe in him through Jesus Christ, *this* was the beginning of thriving in ministry.

Yet, God didn’t just call us to acknowledge Christ as our Savior. God called us to be his servants and to serve him in ministry.

Paul’s calling is a good example. In [Galatians 1:15-16](#) he acknowledges that he had been both called by God’s grace *and* called to have a specific ministry — to preach to the Gentiles: “But when God, who set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles.

Looking at women in [Scripture](#) gives us a greater understanding of our calling and the assurance we need. We see a variety of callings. We see different missions and tasks. We see that every form of ministry is valuable.

2. Perspective on Your Role

To thrive in ministry, we must realize there are different missions and tasks for specific times. There is breadth to ministry. We need perspective on our roles within the wide scope of ministry.

From the Old Testament through the New Testament, a range of women were called to serve in both specific and non-specific roles. It is the same for us. We are called to serve regardless of who we are and what we have done. We can draw confidence by serving God in various roles.

Here are a few biblical women we can draw strength from:

Eve was called to “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” in [Genesis 1:28](#). Eve broke God’s command in the Garden, yet it was by God’s grace she could fulfill the role she had been given. When Eve gave birth, she responded by saying

“With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.” Eve fulfilled her role to *increase in number* and gave gratitude to God for enabling her to do so.

Sarai, along with Abram, was called by the grace of God from a pagan nation to salvation: “The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you’” ([Genesis 12:1](#)). Sarai, whose name was changed to Sarah, was called to “be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her” ([Genesis 17:16](#)).

Miriam served as a prophet and worship leader ([Exodus 15:20](#)). **Deborah** was called to be a leader of Israel, and also a prophet ([Judges 4:4](#)). **Esther** served as a spokeswoman for God’s people and pleaded to the king for their mercy ([Esther 4:8](#)).

In the New Testament, **Mary** served as the mother of Jesus ([Luke 1:38](#)). **Anna** ministered as a prophet and spoke about how Jesus would bring about the redemption of Israel ([Luke 2:38](#)). In Paul’s letters, **Phoebe** served as a deacon ([Romans 16:1](#)). **Priscilla** was a co-worker along with her husband ([Romans 16:3](#)). **Tryphena** and **Tryphosa**, along with other women, “worked hard in the Lord” ([Romans 16:12](#)).

Tryphena and Tryphosa’s ministry roles are less specific, yet no less significant. They join other women who served in roles we know little about, as mothers and providers. **Jochebed**’s “ministry” was to hide her child, Moses, and not be afraid of the king’s edict ([Hebrews 11:23](#)). **Joanna**, **Susanna** and other women served by supporting Jesus’ ministry ([Luke 8:3](#)).

Perhaps your calling is to minister to and raise your children to be godly men and women. Maybe your calling is to serve in the background and meet the most basic needs of others in more prominent roles. All positions have their purpose and value.

3. Perspective on Your Priorities

The third thing we need in ministry is perspective on our priorities. Our focus needs to be devotion to God through Jesus Christ. We have already established that our ministry is grounded in our call to salvation. Therefore, our ministry is based on God’s grace. God’s mercy compels us to be devoted in ministry to him, not just the task we are doing.

As [Romans 12:1](#) says: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship.”

We tend to think of devotion as passive, perhaps like Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, learning from him. Yet, devotion is also exhibited in serving God.

As [1 Samuel 12:24](#) says: “But be sure to fear the Lord and faithfully serve him. Think of all the wonderful things he has done for you.”

Many women in [Scripture](#) showed their devotion to God through their service and their servant-like hearts. Mary the mother of Jesus was willing to risk her reputation and her relationships to serve God. May we, like Mary, be willing to say in ministry, “I am the Lord’s servant,” and “May your word to me be fulfilled” ([Luke 1:38](#)).

Mary’s devotion as a servant was grounded in the mercy she had been shown. We see it at the beginning of her song: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant” ([Luke 1:46-48](#)).

Centuries before her, another woman also called herself a servant before the Lord. Hannah made a vow, saying, “Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head” ([1 Samuel 1:11](#)).

Twice Hannah called herself a servant in her prayer and then again to Eli the priest: “I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I had not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief” ([1 Samuel 1:15-16](#)).

Hannah reminds us that even at the lowest points of life or ministry, a servant-like heart and attitude is what we need.

4. Perspective on Others

Finally, to thrive in ministry we need a community of faithful women and friends. One beautiful scriptural example of women helping each other in their calling is Mary and Elizabeth.

After Mary had been visited by the angel Gabriel and the presence of the Holy Spirit had come upon her, Mary went to spend time with Elizabeth. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke words of encouragement to Mary.

“In a loud voice she exclaimed: ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ... Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!’” ([Luke 1:42](#), 45).

Although not specifically stated, we sense the value of community among the women who surrounded Jesus in the Gospels. In their devotion to Jesus, they became a strong community working together in ministry — meeting his needs while on the road, providing

hospitality and meals, opening their homes, anointing him and preparing him for what lay ahead, and sharing the Good News of his [resurrection](#).

Use this prayer, based on our four points to thrive in ministry, to live out your faith in service to God and others.

Lord God,

Whatever I do in the ministry, may I respond with confidence to the call you have given me. May I live out the role you have given me with a servant heart in devotion to Jesus Christ my Lord. May I surround myself with a community of like-minded women who can encourage me and strengthen me in my work.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.