

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

Way to go! Your team has a vision for blessing the women within your sphere of influence. You're brainstorming the details...date, type of event, theme, speaker, songs, decorations, publicity, registration, food, maybe even a few door prizes. Naturally, you want your efforts to succeed. You want the women to feel loved, to enjoy themselves, and to be spiritually refreshed. Most of all, you want life transformation. To make that a reality, here are a few behind-the-scenes tips to consider whether you're planning a weekend retreat, a one-day conference, or a single session.

Bathe your efforts in prayer.

- Pray together as a committee on a monthly basis prior to your event, or form a prayer committee comprised of several women who feel called to this ministry.
- Ask the Lord to put His message within the speaker's heart and to anoint her for the task. Ask the Lord to prepare the women's hearts to hear, and respond to, the message that will be presented. Ask Him to guide every detail so that He will be honored and can accomplish His purposes in the lives of every woman present.
- Pray with the speaker at the event – it offers great encouragement.
- Have the prayer team available to pray with individual women during the event as needed.

Communicate with your speaker. She may be preparing for multiple speaking events at the same time, so early communication will help her best meet your group's needs. This will also ensure that everyone's expectations are understood.

- Discuss the theme so she can prepare or tweak her messages.
- Tell her the time your event begins and ends so she can make travel arrangements with enough flexibility to search for seat sales (when applicable) to help keep your costs down.
- About three weeks prior to the actual event, give her a fairly accurate number re: attendees so she can ship books in advance. Remember, she'll pay shipping costs based on that number, so try to be as accurate as possible to avoid excessive fees.
- The week of the event, give her the phone number of the place where she'll be staying (so she can leave that information with her family). Give her the name and cell phone number of the person who will pick her up at the airport (if applicable) so she can make contact in case of unexpected delays.

Consider your speaker's needs.

- Re: accommodation. Many professional speakers prefer hotel accommodation over being billeted in a private home. The reason is simple – she needs proper rest to stay healthy and able to meet the demands of this type of ministry. It also provides her with the privacy and flexibility she needs to review her messages and maintain her devotional time.

- Re: transportation. Please provide a female driver when transportation is necessary. Do not put your speaker in a potentially compromising situation by sending her from place to place alone with a man who is not her husband.
- Assign someone to be her “buddy” at the event. That woman will make sure all necessary equipment is ready for use (microphone, podium, digital projector, etc.) She will ensure there’s a cup or bottle of drinking water for the speaker at the podium. She will provide assistance at the speaker’s book table, and she will provide companionship for the speaker at mealtimes. Remember – professional speakers often minister to a different group of women every weekend for several months each year, and even though it’s fulfilling, it can be lonely. It’s nice to have a friend.

Recognize the importance of good publicity.

- If your event is open to other churches, communicate early with those women’s ministry leaders. Tell them about your plans and give them written information re: date, time, location, cost, and speaker bio.
- When a group invites me to speak, I provide a bulletin insert for advertising purposes. These are most effective if included in bulletins at least twice in the month prior to the event. Ask the women’s ministry leaders in other churches to include them in their bulletins, too. I also encourage advertising committees to take these to local Christian bookstores to be used as bag stuffers.
- For an open event, I can provide a news release for the local newspaper upon request – that’s free advertising that might reach those who don’t attend church regularly.
- Design and mount 8x10” posters on church doors, on bulletin boards at grocery stores when permissible, at community centers, public libraries – wherever women might see them.
- If you’re coordinating with a caterer or a facility that needs a deadline so they can plan their part properly, include your registration deadline on the publicity materials.

Offer incentives for early registration. Simple motivators work because women love a bargain!

- For instance, if your single event is scheduled for April 15th and costs \$65, tell them that everyone who registers by March 1 receives a \$10 discount. If your weekend retreat is scheduled for mid-February and costs \$125, give a \$15 discount to earlybirds who register before Christmas.

Provide little extras. Attention to “little extras” will speak volumes to attendees, making them feel cared about.

- A pretty centrepiece adds a finishing touch to tables. Buy items at the Dollar Store or fresh flowers at Costco, and use your creative imagination.
- At overnight events, consider putting a welcome card or a small theme-related token on each bed before the women arrive (a homemade bookmark or a candy bar with a name that fits the theme, for instance).

- Some groups give a little gift bag upon arrival – this may include a candy or two, a pen, a purse-sized Kleenex package, a pretty candle (Dollar Store variety), a miniature flashlight, and whatever else might be cutesy or theme-related. The local Christian bookstore might like to provide a sale coupon for each bag.
- For weekend events, if desired, I will provide questions for the women to use in their devotional times, designed to complement the weekend theme.

Consider having small group discussions.

- The nature of weekend retreats lends itself to small group discussions (30-40 minutes after one session or possibly two, depending on how many sessions are planned). These stimulate interactive heart-to-heart sharing – an added plus to the spiritual teaching they’re receiving in the sessions.
- If the committee wants to include this in the schedule, I provide questions in advance to be photocopied.

Provide time for testimonies. At weekend events, it’s nice to have a time where ladies can open their hearts re: what the Lord is doing in their lives.

- Set aside 20-30 minutes after the last session for this purpose, depending on the size of the group.
- Appoint a moderator who can tactfully move the time along so everyone who wishes to speak has the opportunity. If desired, I can lead this time for you.
- Ask the worship leader to be prepared to lead in a group song if there’s an extended period of silence between testimonies.

Ensure time to relax.

- Especially at weekend events, make sure the women have ample time to rest and relax. Sitting in too many sessions, or sessions that are too long, makes them weary. They need time to learn, time to laugh, and time to rest or just go for a walk or play a board game.
- Women enjoy evening snacks. Depending on what’s provided at the venue, you might suggest that they bring their favorite treat and contribute to a “snack smorgasbord” on Friday evening.

To book Grace for your women’s event, call 604-755-8285 or email grace@gracefox.com

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