

WOMEN GROWING TOGETHER

Sidebyside



WOMEN GROWING TOGETHER

SideBySide

Side by side can be defined as, 'one Christian taking the initiative with another individual to help them know Christ better and obey Him more fully... leaving the results to God.'

Sophie De Witt
One-to-one (Authentic)



I wonder who has been the most influential Christian woman in your life. The person who came alongside you as a young Christian and showed you what it's like to live for Jesus. Somebody who quietly drew you aside to encourage you and gave you a hand up when you were in a hard place. Someone who meant it when they said they would pray, not just for you, but with you over coffee. The influence of others in our lives can be a very simple, subtle thing, but its significance can last a lifetime.

It's good to thank God for those who took time to come alongside and encourage us to grow in Christ and keep going on the path of faith.



WOMEN LIVING FOR JESUS SIDE BY SIDE

Side by side

When God blesses us through the influence of others, it is so that we, in turn, can draw alongside others to pass that blessing on. In the busyness of our everyday lives it is easy to lose sight of how investing in such relationships can have lifelong blessing.

In the Bible we see the power of drawing side by side in Christian relationships. Jesus shared his ministry with Peter, James and John. Naomi and Ruth shared life together through hard times and encouraged one another to live out God's purposes for their lives across the generations. Paul tells Titus to encourage older women to model godly living so as to inspire younger women in the church.

Paul reminds the church at Thessalonica how important it is to, **'encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.'**

(1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Sometimes they were doing it, but they still needed the reminder to keep going, not to let it slip, to find fresh ways of sharing God in their everyday lives. How like us today. **Side by side** offers an opportunity to emphasize, explore and express this aspect of what it means to be women together for Christ and his church.

Would you like me to call for you next week?



WHY SIDE BY SIDE?

Side By Side

Whether we like to admit it or not, we need other people alongside us as we travel through life. We need the love they can offer and the challenge they can bring.

A few significant people with whom we can be honest and on whom we can depend for wisdom, prayer, and encouragement, can make a difference. Maybe more than ever, we need to get side by side as we seek to follow Jesus.

In a world of social networking, with easy communication at our fingertips, many have never felt more isolated and alone. With whom do we find ourselves side by side for conversations of any depth?

‘...I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.’

Psalm 89:1 (ESV)

Women’s ministry is changing. With different lifestyle patterns and approaches to learning, younger women are not always looking for more meetings, but instead are longing that someone who has walked the path of faith would come alongside them as they walk theirs. The opportunity to share side by side, rather than always being taught from the front, is increasingly valued.

In our lives, it’s good to recognise the need to pass the baton on to the next generation. Investing side by side, sharing the wisdom of the years and encouraging fresh ways of doing things, are key to the future. As we come side by side with others, we can point one another to Jesus, show practical love and friendship, and encourage each other to grow in faith.



SIDE BY SIDE - GETTING ALONGSIDE

SideBySide

Perhaps you're thinking, this sounds great but my life is already so busy and what wisdom or encouragement would I have to offer anyone else? Or maybe, I'm quite a shy person, I wouldn't know where to start. But none of this needs to be time consuming, complicated or difficult. There are all sorts of ways to live for Jesus side by side in your church and with those you rub shoulders with in the community.

*I'm too shy
to take part...*



You could get side by side to develop:

- A caring relationship with someone you know who is going through a hard time;
- A prayer partnership for one another;
- A relationship which helps someone come to experience church and explore the gospel;
- A working relationship that helps someone grow in leadership so that they can take over from you;
- A relationship where older and younger women get to know each other, share their faith in Jesus and benefit from their different life experiences;
- A time to read the Bible together and talk about what God is teaching you.

Perhaps something else springs to mind. Maybe you are already doing this in ways that you can simply build upon or develop. Remember, it doesn't just have to be you and one other person. It can work just as well in threes and fours.

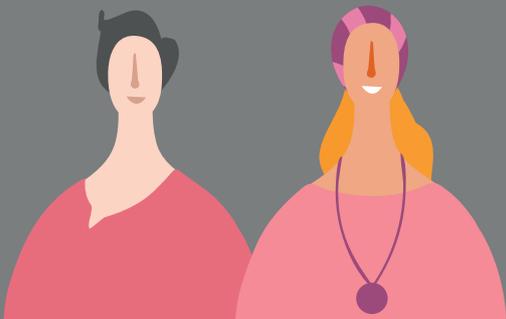


SIDE BY SIDE - GETTING STARTED

Side By Side

Here are a few practical tips for getting started:

- Pray for opportunities and see who comes to mind, what conversations arise and who crosses your path. Be alert to God's leading to a neighbour, someone who sits near you in church, or a mum who, like you, leaves children off at a youth organisation or collects them from school;
- Invite someone for coffee. Decide what time you have and make yourself available. As you



do so, open up about yourself and your faith and see where the conversation goes. Offer to meet again. Allow time to grow in your relationship and openness to share;

- If it is helpful, choose a resource that will give shape to your getting side by side to pray, read, share or study the Bible;
- Always be open to God's prompting about who else he might be nudging you to invite to be side by side.

Who is God nudging me towards?

Why not take the step and discover how God wants to bring his influence to bear in ways you could never have imagined as you draw side by side with those he is nudging you towards?



Suggested Resources

Side by side

Visit www.presbyterianireland.org/sidebyside for links to the following resources to help shape your expression of a side by side relationship:

- *Pastoral conversations: downloadable Bible prompts for pastoral care;*
- *Proximity: relevant and challenging content for the context of relational discipleship;*
- *Prayer partnerships: Let's Pray | ASK prayer cards | Journeys;*
- *The Word 121: designed to share the Bible with those who aren't Christians;*
- *Community Bible Experience: a new way to talk about the Bible with others;*
- *One-to-one* by Sophie De Witt (Authentic);
- *Dig Deeper* by Nigel Beynon and Andrew Sach (IVP);
- *Side by Side* by Edward T Welch (Crossway);
- *Women of the Word* by Jen Wilken (Crossway; First edition 15 August 2014);
- *One2One: Real Women* by Sarah Bradley (The Good Book Company) for coming alongside younger Christians;
- *One2One - 24 studies for Bible Reading Partnerships* by Andrew Cornes (The Good Book Company);
- *5 Things to Pray* (The Good Book Company).


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