CTA Presents: Focus on Leadership

How to Plan a Women’s Retreat

**Guest:** Cyndee Ownbey, author of *Rethinking Women’s Ministry: Biblical, Practical Tools for Cultivating a Flourishing Community*. Cyndee serves as a mentor to thousands of women’s ministry leaders through her website and Facebook community, Women’s Ministry Toolbox.

**Introduction:** A women’s retreat can be the highlight of the ministry year for many participants, but it’s a big job. Use these tips for making it less stressful for everyone.

**Summary:**

How to get started on planning a retreat:

* Divide duties and responsibilities
  + Ministry leader: date, speaker, theme
  + Planning team: location, food, other details
* Plan well in advance
  + Big decisions, begin a year ahead
  + Small details, begin six months ahead
* Pray
  + For every retreat aspect—before, during, after
  + For every participant—can divide among the retreat team
    - Health
    - Childcare
    - Safe travels
    - New friendships
    - Tender hearts
    - Spiritual growth
  + At the retreat itself
    - Prayer room
    - Prayer stations
    - Prayer walk
    - Prayer partners

Framework of a retreat:

* Overall schedule—can be flexible
  + Length, typically 2 nights
  + Location, often 1.5–3 hours away
  + Meals
  + Speakers, worship, sessions, and activities—including free time
* Special evening activity—build community and deepen relationships
  + Group tickets to a show
  + Christian comedian
  + Prayer stations
  + Contests
  + Board games
* Free time
  + Give time to process what they’ve learned
  + Allow a physical or mental break
  + Could include suggested activities
    - nearby options, trails, theaters
    - signups for planned activities: classes, discussions, projects
    - check with the retreat center for additional options

**Resources:**

* [womensministrytraining.com](https://womensministrytoolbox.teachable.com/)
* [Women’s Ministry Toolbox](https://womensministrytoolbox.com/blog/)
* [ctainc.com](https://www.ctainc.com/) (offering both affordable and free retreat resources)