

## Suggested Esther-Sisters Format

The following is an order for a meaningful time together that has proved most effective:

- + After prayerful consideration to participate in an *Esther-Sister* relationship, a choice is made as to which role will be assumed, either as the experienced leader, “Deborah,” or an emerging leader, “Esther.”
- + Two women agree about:
  - \*how they will meet - in person, by phone, online, video-conferencing etc.
  - \*how often - regularly on schedule, weekly, monthly, as needed, or any combination
  - \*location to meet - in a home, restaurant, church room, etc.
  - \*who calls who and when it is acceptable
  - \* initial length of time of the relationship
- + When together, Deborah asks two suggested questions to open purposeful dialogue such as:
  - \*What are your priorities today?
  - \*What problems or issues are you facing?
- + After sharing, there is time for feedback and discussion
- + Praying together over the issues discussed, including prayer for each other
- + Discussion of future actions: 1 or 2 specific goals or actions is best
- + Affirmation of an agreement as to when and how to meet again

*S.W.I.M.*'s “*Esther Sisters*” Coordination Team prays over and connects potential “Sister” combinations when requested. The team is available for consultation at any time.



## Meet the Sponsor

*S.W.I.M. International* began in 2004 as a simple but intentional gathering of Spirit-led women who were each called of God to leadership in the Body of Christ that they might share and pray together for mutual encouragement and support. Gathered with these women was another group of committed Prayer Intercessors who dedicated themselves to pray regularly for each of the leaders.

In 2007, after several “Gatherings,” Retreats and regionally organized prayer groups, the network of support and prayer was formed into a Non-profit Religious Corporation known as *Supporting Women In Ministry International*. Having open participation rather than formal membership, *S.W.I.M.* continues to provide spiritual support to Christian women in their callings, through Regional Prayer Groups in both Spanish and English, organized events, an on-line Prayer Chain and a two-tiered licensing program for ministerial credentials.



### For more information contact:

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## *Introducing . . .*

### *“Esther-Sisters”*



### *Mentoring Relationships for Christian Women Leaders*

*“Therefore, my . . . sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel.”*

Philippians 4:1-3 TNIV

Presented by



Supporting Women In Ministry

## “Esther - Sisters” Relationships *Scriptural Significance and Purpose*

Answering a question, Jesus gave the purpose of human existence by summing up the Ten Commandments saying we are to first love God with all our being, and then our neighbor. Nothing is more important than a relationship with God followed by our relationships with other people. As women, we are nurturers, caring for the needs of others and we gain insight and strength from being together learning from each other.

The Bible describes relationships that were essential in the spiritual development of God’s people. Elisha had Elijah who passed to him his mantle of authority. Paul the Apostle had Barnabas to teach him after his Damascus Road experience. Ruth had Naomi who gave her wise guidance. Esther had Mordecai to watch over her. Mary had her cousin Elizabeth for encouragement at a crucial time. Through Church history mentoring friendships followed the model and admonishment of Scripture as in Titus 2:1,3-8, ***“You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine...Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers...but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husband and children to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy and kind...so that no one will malign the Word of God.”***

**Purpose:** The “*Esther - Sisters*” relationship program is designed to strengthen, protect, develop and encourage women leaders to fulfill their calling to build up the Body of Christ for the spreading of the Gospel in the world. It is a spiritual variation of a mentoring relationship identifying each person as either:

**Deborah:** Experienced, mature spiritual leader in the Body of Christ, gifted in nurturing, or  
**Esther:** Called of God as an emerging leader, eager to learn and grow spiritually.

## Are you a Deborah?



You probably are a *Deborah* if you are . . .

- ~ successful at what you do
  - ~ aware that Christianity is truly relational
  - ~ always learning from your life experiences
  - ~ challenged by something that will require your energy and wisdom
  - ~ enjoying your relationship with God and with other believers
  - ~ seeking ministry for which God prepared you
  - ~ looking for a ministry that fits you
  - ~ desiring a sense of significance that will make a difference in the lives of others
  - ~ practicing the discipline and privilege of prayer . . . if so, then . . .
- There are *Esther's* for whom you can pray, care for and greatly bless!



## Are you an Esther?

You probably are an *Esther* if you . . .

- ~ had a feeling of destiny when you were younger
- ~ hunger to learn new things, discover hidden talents and fine-tune your known skills
- ~ like friendships with people who genuinely care about your personal welfare and future
- ~ desire to know someone really wise whose had an amazing life and who you can admire
- ~ enjoy being with people who deeply know the Lord, hear well His voice and see their earnest prayers answered . . . if so, then . . .

There is a *Deborah* with whom you can pray, share, learn, emulate, admire and honor.



You can be both a *Deborah* and an *Esther* in different relationships and at the same time!

## The Role of Deborah *7 Simple Keys*

1. **Love** ~ Everyone needs to realize they are loved. Deborah’s role is not a mothering love, but one of caring and keeping the other person’s best interest at heart.
2. **Encourage** ~ You will recognize abilities, talents, skills and potential, giving affirmation.
3. **Be Open** ~ Share your experiences when appropriate, both failures and successes, creating a safe place to share concerns and needs.
4. **Listen** ~ Everyone wants to be heard rather than given advice. Careful focused listening hears feelings and identifies needs.
5. **Know Purpose** ~ You are not a professional counselor, teacher or expert, but your goal is to exhort Esther, according the God’s Word, to fulfill her calling in the service of Christ.
6. **Pray** ~ Praying together is the essential context of the “*Esther Sisters*” relationship. All that is accomplished comes about by prayer.
7. **Enjoy** ~ Relax, laugh, and enjoy each other!

## The Role of Esther *Many Excellent Benefits*

- ~ It’s much easier to learn from someone else’s experience, avoiding the pain of trial and error. We do not have to reinvent the wheel!
- ~ Second-hand learning also saves time, energy, money and stress.
- ~ Life can be understood as a series of struggles and problem-solving. Knowing you are not alone can provide a sense of security and build confidence in yourself.
- ~ Having someone pray for you in the strictest confidence, is an immeasurable blessing.
- ~ A wise, committed spiritual friend who has your best interests at heart can advance your spiritual growth faster than you blazing through life’s hurdles on your own. *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If they fall down, they can help each other up. But pity those who fall and have no one to help them up!”* Ecc.4:9-10