



Soul Care for **Women**

Encourage. Support. Love.®

Creating a Soul Care Group

Introduction

Soul Care

What does it mean to care for another's soul? It means you take someone's heart in your hands, holding it gently, and guard it against anything that seeks to harm it.

What is the soul?

Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

God breathed life into the body and the soul came alive. The soul is the immaterial (non-physical) part of a human being that encompasses one's emotions, desires, and spiritual longings.

Why Soul Care for Women?

The name Soul Care for Women came about from being a part of a group of women who made a commitment to care for each other during a difficult time. These women showed a unique ability to care for each other's emotional and spiritual needs. What developed was a spirit of soul care or Soul Patrol with each member doing her best to watch over and care for the other's emotional, spiritual and physical needs.

Soul Care for Women

Our mission

Soul Care's mission encompasses three foundational principles – encouragement, support, and love. Our mission is to help women form Soul Care groups that will embrace and live out these principles.

- **Encouragement.** The word encouragement means to give strength. True encouragement gives strength and hope to those who feel weak, uncertain or fearful. Whether in word or deed, godly encouragement lifts the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of another and strengthens them to move forward with hope.
- **Support.** The word support means to hold firm and prevent something or someone from falling. Support can be physical, emotional or spiritual in nature. The best support addresses the need and stays intact until the need is met.
- **Love.** True love sees others and serves them through the mercy and grace that Christ shows for his children. To love as God loves is unconditional and expects nothing in return. A Christ-centered love is active, alive, and life changing.

Our Vision:

With these three foundation principles as our guide we want to partner with women to create godly Soul Care groups that will meet each other's physical, emotional and spiritual needs in healthy ways.

Our Plan:

- Collaborate with individuals to establish Soul Care groups in their church or community.
- Partner with individuals or groups who would like to utilize our six week study *If You Knew Her Story*© which focuses on women's thoughts, emotions, actions, and core beliefs in order to change the parts of their story that need healing.

Soul Care - The role of social support in health and healing

Can you think of a time in your life when everything seemed to be turned upside down? When you wondered how you would ever get through the next month, day or hour? If you can answer yes to these two questions you are not alone. Everyone faces a trial or crisis in their life that either knocks them back a few paces or completely flattens them. It is during these times of challenge that we often turn to others to receive support.

Whether you turn to a friend, family member, acquaintance, or professional the type of support that you receive when you are going through a life challenge will have a significant impact on how successfully you navigate the challenge before you, and how emotionally healthy you come out on the other side. Choosing the right help to get through tough times is key to your health and healing.

It is best to have a healthy support system in place before you enter a crisis or challenge rather than attempt to put one into place when in the middle. Forming a support team in the middle of a crisis leaves you vulnerable to making poor support choices. Unhealthy help can hinder your ability to move forward or cause more problems than you began with. That is why having a Soul Care group in place before a challenge occurs provides the best opportunity to regaining your balance in life.

Healthy Support

Individuals who lack healthy support experience the greatest emotional, spiritual, and physical struggles as they attempt to navigate their challenge alone. When we have the right people in our lives to help us, our burden feels lighter, and our discouragement turns to hope.

Many people struggle with identifying healthy support. Therefore, in the midst of their challenge or pain they reach out to the first outstretched hand that comes their way. In reaching for that hand they give little thought as to what accepting such help may cost them if it proves to be harmful.

So what does healthy support look like? Healthy support uniquely meets your need by helping you carry your burden. Restoration occurs when the support in your life gives you the time to wade through the problem, encouragement as you do the work necessary to fix what is broken, wisdom and guidance to make the best choices, and faith in God that He will provide strength for the journey.

Those that support you are not required to solve the problem, take away the pain, fix what is broken, or restore you to wholeness. All of these occur through much work on your part, proper support, prayer, and faith as you learn to navigate the challenges set before you.

It takes time to invite people into your life who can provide this level of support. You can choose who you would like to invite into your life. The choices you make will have a significant impact on your emotional, spiritual and physical health and life satisfaction. Religious affiliations, authority or credentials does not automatically qualify a person to be healthy support. Choose wisely. When you do, it nothing short of a miracle when you are there to support each other through life's ups and downs.

The Role of Soul Care Groups

The goal of forming a Soul Care Group is to connect with three to five women who will agree to be a healthy and godly support system for one another. There is no magic number, but you want more than two.

Honesty and trust are the foundations of all Soul Care Groups. Without them you have nothing more than pretense and a nice social group with little substance. Part of being honest is being real. Being real requires vulnerability. Vulnerability requires trust. Trust requires honesty. The two are tightly interwoven. As each is strengthened so are the individuals and the amount of nurturing soul care that can be provided.

Here are some of the key concepts a Soul Care Group may want to consider embracing:

- Listen with your heart
- Empathic understanding
- Set appropriate boundaries, limits, and expectations
- Provide vibrant and growth producing interactions
- Be consistent, dependable, and accountable to one another
- Encourage healing, growth, and moving forward
- Discourage self-serving motives
- Godly, faith-based focus

Integrating several of these concepts into your group interactions will lead toward healthier relationships in all parts of your life, not just your Soul Care Group.

Forming a Soul Care Group

Now that you have considered some of the benefits of forming a Soul Care Group, consider putting one into place. Each group is going to look different based on the needs of the group members, why the group was formed, and what goals and expectations the group members have. So whether you are forming an inner city group in Boston, MA or a group in the farmlands of Idaho, you can have a group that meets the unique needs of each member. For example, a group of stay at home moms may meet weekly or biweekly during the day because their children are of the same age and can play together while the mom's meet. A group of women working outside the home may meet bi-weekly or monthly over lunch or dinner after work. Some may be a mixture of women in various life stages and careers and meet monthly on a Saturday morning over breakfast. Who, what, and where are all important to consider, but just as important is when - and this involves a calendar of regularly scheduled meetings.

If You Knew her Story©

Another way to form a Soul Care group and get to know the women who have come together very well is to utilize our six-week interactive study called *If You Knew Her Story©*. *If You Knew Her Story©* helps women explore their thoughts, emotions, actions and core beliefs as they relate to their individual stories. Women can share as much or as little as they like throughout the six weeks with their Soul Care group. We have found this to be a very successful way to form your first group or to help guide an existing group to understanding the meaning of true soul care. If you would like more information on this study please email info@soulcare4women.com or go to Soulcare4women.com.

God bless you as you work to create deep and meaningful relationships with those whom you invite into your life.

Jackie Shannon
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