**The Importance of Planning Ministry by Jennifer Maggio**

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance. Col. 3:23-24*

Have you ever been somewhere and you weren’t sure you were supposed to be there? Maybe you were new to a church and you couldn’t find your Bible study group. Or maybe your children are new to the school and you are trying to find their classrooms. Whatever the case, there is certain awkwardness when you stumble into a new environment, unsure and nervous.

Lack of planning and preparation in ministry can be similar. You don’t know where you are, what you are doing, or if you are really supposed to be there.

Ministry is serious. It’s God’s work. It’s about bringing others into relationship with our Savior. God works through people. He works through *us* – you and me. We are examples of his grace. We show others God’s love through how we treat them. Ministry is about Heaven or Hell. It’s not to be taken lightly. And make no mistake. Whether you work full-time at a church or simply volunteer on the weekends, you are in ministry. We all are.

Taking time to plan and prepare for your ministry assignment is important. If you are leading a Bible study, pray, seek, plan, pray, read, re-read, make notes, and practice your lesson. Those who have come to be part of your program, class, Bible study, or support group deserve as much. If you are serving on the greeter’s team at Sunday services, then arrive early, spend time in prayer, and make preparations to do it with excellence. Are you babysitting children in the nursery? Prepare a great craft or activity.

Are you launching a new program in your church? Take the time to plan the logistics. Take the time to think through the what-ifs in hopes of being better-prepared to handle challenges that will surely come.  Take the time to do some online research. Be sure to attend training classes, if possible.

Some of the worst support groups or connect groups or classes that I’ve been part of were not because the leader wasn’t gifted to share or teach, not because they weren’t fully capable, but because they hadn’t taken the time to prepare.

*Jennifer Maggio is founder of The Life of a Single Mom Ministries. She is an award-winning author of several books and has appeared in countless media venues, including The New York Times, The 700 Club, Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and many more.  For more information, visit*[*http://www.thelifeofasinglemom.com*](http://www.thelifeofasinglemom.com/)*.*