

A Journey to Rest

God's faithfulness . . . through community

What was I afraid of?

LATE LAST FALL, Diane McBeth contacted me and asked if I'd be interested in participating in Soul Sisters. I'd read about it before and was intrigued, but this was going to take me way outside of my comfort zone. In fact, a year earlier, maybe even a few months earlier, my answer would have been a hard "No." At this time, though, I found myself saying "Yes," definitely with some trepidation, but determined to follow through.

What was I afraid of? I was afraid of being vulnerable. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to contribute. I was afraid God might call me further out of my comfort zone. I was afraid I wasn't spiritual enough. I was afraid of a lot of things. Yes, I was challenged in those areas, but what happened was that I was drawn into a community where I found rest.

We met weekly starting in January. For the first part of the gathering, Cathy Newton explained a spiritual practice. We were then divided into groups, with an understanding of confidentiality and a posture of listening. As a small group, we discussed questions designed to draw out

You may be interested in experiencing what Carol shares in her article or perhaps starting a Soul Sisters group at your church. Learn more at baptistwomen.com/resources and sign up when fall registration opens.

by Carol Gouveia

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our relationship with the Lord. The groups were the same each week, so I got to know the four others in my group. As Soul Sisters 1 drew to a close, our little group decided we wanted to continue and do Soul Sisters 2. This became our Monday evening routine for 20 weeks throughout the winter and spring.

All of this happened online. I know we are all missing getting together face to face. Yet I'm convinced that the relationships developed during this time online would not have happened face to face, for a couple of reasons:

- Being from different locations across southern Ontario, it would have been impossible for us to have gathered face to face, even if it had been permitted.
- We didn't know each others' families or church communities. This allowed for a space of safety where we could be deeply honest when we shared.

We created a What'sApp group where we've been able to connect during the week, sharing prayer requests, joys and trials. Again, the code of confidentiality and the fact that we are not connected in any other way, allows us to be honest and vulnerable in a rare and beautiful way. We continue to connect through the app, even though Soul Sisters 2 is complete. We planned to meet online a couple of times over the summer for fun and for prayer together. This fall, we hope to participate in Soul Sisters 3.

This has been a wonderful experience that I cherish. God drew us together, revealing Himself to us through one another, drawing each of us closer to Him, giving us a place of safety and rest.

¹Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him.

²Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. ~ Psalm 62:1-2 (NIV) ■

GREAT CANADIAN BIBLE STUDY 2022

EVERY YEAR, Baptist women across Canada meet in small groups to do a pre-set Bible study that focuses on women from the Bible. Participants bring a small offering to support an overseas project that lasts for three years. We will publish Information about 2022's project on our website at baptistwomen.com/events.

How the project will work

Most women's groups pick a date in January but any date that works for you and your women will do.

2021's Bible Study: Titus' Call To Women

This study is a departure from our usual emphasis on a particular woman of the Bible and instead looks at the instructions given to Titus as he leads the church of Crete.

The focus is on relationship—how women can

mentor and encourage other women—how community makes our faith stronger when we share our stories reflecting God's faithfulness. It is a call to positive attitudes and behaviours that best reflect the image of Christ in our lives. Yes, older women are to mentor younger women but more than that, we need to share in spiritual friendship.

During the past season of masks, distancing, limited church gatherings and other restrictions, we may have been tempted toward a more reclusive lifestyle than our normal patterns. Study author Rev. Faye Reynolds hopes that "God can use this study to once again pull us toward one another in deepening friendship and spiritual care."

You'll find the guide and a collection form on our website at baptistwomen.com/resources. ■