

# International Women's Ministries Heritage Observance Program

*Fruit of Her Hands*

**By Dr. Mary Ruth Stone**

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***International Women's Ministries***  
***Heritage Observance Program***



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## *International Women's Ministries Heritage Observance — October 6*

### *"Fruit of Her Hands"*

#### **PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS**

- Objective:** To highlight the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Church of God Women's Ministries, 1936-2006
- Project:** Each congregation is encouraged to receive an offering for the International Women's Ministries translation of materials project. The funds will provide printed materials, web site access, and women's conferences around the world and in various languages.
- Preparation:** Well in advance of the projected date, ask your pastor to consider scheduling a service on or around October 6 to spotlight Women's Ministries heritage observance.
- Decorations:** Create an arrangement of real or artificial fruit on a table or stand that is visible to the entire congregation. Coordinate bulletin covers or program materials with the colors and fruits in the arrangement.
- Participants:** Pastor's wife, women's leaders, and others whom they may select.

#### **SUGGESTIONS FOR ORDER OF WORSHIP**

- Reading of  
Theme Scripture:** "But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates" (Proverbs 31:30, 31).
- Prayer:** Have the pastor, pastor's spouse, or women's leader pray a prayer of thanks for the ministry of women in your local church as well as the Christian church globally and historically. Ask God to continue blessing the ministry of women. Ask His guidance and direction in passing the message of the gospel to the next generation.
- Praise and Worship:** Select praise and worship music according to your local practice keeping the theme and time constraints in mind.
- Historical Recap:** (Read or recount the following history. It may be presented using *PowerPoint*.)

## ***Recognized Fruit***

The Apostle Paul is often referred to as the *Apostle to the Gentiles*. He received what we refer to as *The Macedonian Call* in the form of a vision (Acts 16:9, 10). He responded by traveling to Philippi where his first recorded ministry activity was to attend a women's prayer meeting. There he met Lydia, a business woman who was converted and baptized. She housed Paul's missionary team and supported their efforts. Women have been a vital part of the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ from that time forward.

Women have been actively involved in the ministry of the Church of God since it was formed in 1896. Five of its eight original members were female. During the late 1920s, Mrs. S. J. Wood, wife of the overseer of Texas, formed a group to assist the church in Electra, Texas. They called themselves the "Ladies Willing Worker Band." Her idea spread nationwide, and the "LWWB" became the forerunner of today's Church of God Women's Ministries.

At the General Assembly of 1936, the LWWB became an official part of the structure of the Church of God. Later, it was decided that the wife of the general overseer would, by virtue of her husband's office, be the international president. The woman serving in that capacity in 1936 was Blanche Walker, wife of J. H. Walker, Sr. Mrs. Walker was known as a woman of prayer, and prayer has remained a vital part of the ministry of Church of God women.

Today we hope to present to you a picture of diverse Spirit-filled ministry by women in our local church and around the world.

### **Offering**

Receive an offering for the translation of women's materials into other languages as well as distribution to various language groups as requested. From time to time, money from translation funds is used to sponsor women's conferences and retreats outside the USA.

### **Special Music**

Select appropriate special music performed by women and/or girls. One interesting option is to select music typical of each decade beginning with 1936.

### **Introduction to Biblical Application**

(The following material may be presented by one speaker or by a moderator and nine others. If multiple speakers are used, each speaker would present one aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit. While the following may be read, it will be effective if the speaker(s) express the concepts in her/their own words. Remember to set and observe strict guidelines for time. Each speaker's remarks would need to be limited to 2 or 3 minutes if nine speakers are used.)

**Moderator:** The *fruit* from the *hands* of Church of God women's ministries has been abundant for more than seven decades. Join us today in celebrating seven decades of fruitful, formalized ministry.

The Book of Proverbs describes the "Virtuous Woman." In the very last verse, in the words of our theme scripture, these instructions are found: "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."

What is spiritual fruit? Do we have it?

Galatians 5:22-23 speaks of spiritual fruit. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

The nine attributes of spiritual fruit are all present in a spirit-filled life. They should also be manifested in any spiritual ministry of the church.

**1<sup>st</sup> Speaker:** The first characteristic of spiritual fruit is *love*. Love is the very nature of God. 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:7-11 reads: *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*”

International Women’s Ministries demonstrates love through its world mission projects. Over the past 30 years, women have built Bible schools, orphanages, medical clinics, and other meaningful facilities around the world. We show God’s love by sharing His love with others.

(Add an example of the local Women’s Ministries group sharing love through mission projects.)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Speaker:** The second characteristic of spiritual fruit is *joy*. Joy is deeper than mere happiness. The joy of the Spirit is present even during times of sadness. An often quoted scripture is the last clause of Nehemiah 8:10. It reads: *“Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”* It is important to remember that Nehemiah spoke those words to a group of people who had spent several hours hearing the Word of God read aloud to them. Such a setting suggests that true *joy* comes from the Word of God.

The women’s ministries department has sought joy through the Word in direct study as well as in retreats and conferences. State, regional, national, and international conferences are held around the world. Women who attend find joy in the Word of God as well as in fellowship with one another.

(Add a testimony of the local Women’s Ministries group finding joy in retreat and conference settings.)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Speaker:** The third characteristic of spiritual fruit is *peace*. It is difficult to say what peace is, but we all know when we don’t have it. And when we don’t have it, nothing is more important than acquiring it. Philippians 4:6, 7 reads: *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

Peace is the quiet comfort that comes from the knowledge that God is in control no matter what the circumstances may be. That comfort often accompanies prayer and praise.

Women are very interested in maintaining peaceful relationships within their families. Because of that, they are actively involved in ministry to their own families and others.

(Share an example of the local women ministering to families.)

**4<sup>th</sup> Speaker:** The fourth characteristic of spiritual fruit is *longsuffering*. This is the aspect of spirituality that gives one the ability to be patient with others. It allows us to give others time to grow, mature, and change. It stands in contrast to a quick tempered dismissal of others. James 1:19 admonishes us to “. . . *be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*”

Women’s Ministries demonstrates this attribute by mentoring programs as called for in Titus 2:3-5. In that passage, mature women are told to teach the younger women how to live according to God’s Word. Women often minister to one another in small groups which are formed to address specific life-related needs.

(Give an example of local women mentoring one-on-one or in small groups.)

**5<sup>th</sup> Speaker:** The fifth characteristic of spiritual fruit is *kindness*. Kindness is described by *Strong’s Concordance* as “goodness in action, sweetness of disposition, gentleness in dealing with others, benevolence, kindness, affability.” Those who are kind have the ability to do good things even to those who are somewhat difficult to serve.

The attribute of kindness is shown through the benevolence ministries. Women often provide food, clothing, and shelter for people in need. They are as kind toward those who are victims of their own bad choices as they are toward innocent victims of bad people.

(Add an example of local women’s involvement in benevolence ministries.)

**6<sup>th</sup> Speaker:** The sixth characteristic of spiritual fruit is *goodness*. Goodness is the ability and the willingness to do good things whenever the opportunity arises. This attribute is no respecter of persons. In other words, it fulfills the teaching of Jesus when He said: “*I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.*” The Apostle Paul echoed that philosophy when he wrote: “*Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men*” (Romans 12:17).

Every local church is encouraged to offer a women’s Bible study at least once a year. The Word of God is the source of knowledge that leads to goodness.

(Add a statement about the involvement of local church women in the systematic study of the Bible.)

**7<sup>th</sup> Speaker:** The seventh attribute of spiritual fruit is *faithfulness*. Faithfulness involves living a life consistent with our profession and our promises. There is an old saying that goes like this: “Actions speak louder than words.”

2 Corinthians 3:2, 3 reads: “*You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.*”

Women assume a large part of the teaching responsibility of the church. Those who are faithful live the principles they teach. They keep the promises they make.

(Recognize a mature woman of the church whose life has exemplified faithfulness.)

**8<sup>th</sup> Speaker:** The eighth characteristic of spiritual fruit is *gentleness* or *meekness*. Those with this attribute exhibit sweetness of temperament. They are quick to forgive even as Christ has forgiven us.

Women with a gentle spirit are great teachers of children. One of the powerful ministries that Church of God women have is teaching and training girls. The international department has developed a curriculum for Girls Clubs that is very effective. This ministry allows women to fulfill the admonition of Titus 2:3-5 as mentioned earlier—*that the older women teach the younger women*.

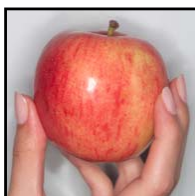
(Tell how girls and young women in the local church are being taught and mentored by mature women.)

**9<sup>th</sup> Speaker:** The ninth and final characteristic of a spirit-filled life is *self-control* or *temperance*. The life with this attribute is recognizable because it is a life that is balanced. There are no extremes of behavior or contradictions between words and deeds. “What you see is what you get,” so to speak. This is the spiritual characteristic that ties all the others together and integrates them.

(Recognize a mature woman of the church whose life exhibits all the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. Choose a woman whose life is balanced and consistent.)

## Closing

Close with a prayer for women and the ministry of women.



## Program Notes

A chronological list regarding the ministry of women in the Church of God is enclosed. It is from the *Women's Ministries Resource and Guidebook*. For more information, order a copy from the Web site at [www.womensministries.cc](http://www.womensministries.cc) or call 423-478-7168.

Consider giving a small favor to all the women present. Mini-sewing kits and/or emery boards with the Women's Ministries logo and the Web site address can be ordered at low cost from the Web site at [www.womensministries.cc](http://www.womensministries.cc) or by calling 423-478-7168.

If you use multiple speakers, you may wish to have each one of them add a real or artificial fruit to a display. It is important to remember, however, that the nine attributes listed in Galatians 5:22, 23 are characteristics of one “fruit of the Spirit,” not nine different fruits.

You may wish to put the nine attributes of spiritual fruit and the supporting scriptures on a *PowerPoint* presentation for projection during the program.

Consider giving a gift or memento to each of the women recognized by speaker 7 and speaker 9.

This may be used as a meal function program by changing the format appropriately. Decorate with fruit and photographs that illustrate the work and activities of women's ministries throughout the history of your local church. An option would be to decorate the tables with memorabilia from various time periods. Hostesses might choose to wear period costumes.

