

In Brief

Happenings and Prayer Points from around the country

OWAKA Catlins Evangelical Church

Happenings:

Mid-year we held a classy ladies dinner, in our Community Centre Supper-Room. The room was nicely decorated with balloons, Christmas lights, flowers, candles etc. Each of our ladies invited 1 or 2 ladies that were not involved in church. Between courses we had singing items, a roll-play of "The Way of the Master" (a program our church has been learning to equip us for evangelism), and Eva Panapa gave her testimony. Girls from our Youth Group served food that we had prepared, and men from our church worked in the kitchen. The evening concluded with a surprise item from our men - a humorous barbershop song with appropriate hats. It was a great night, enjoyed by all.



Eva Panapa at the Owaka Ladies Dinner

For Prayer:

- For courage to share the gospel.
- For those who have committed and those showing interest in the gospel.



A barbershop song performed by the men (who were also working the kitchen) at the classy Owaka Ladies Dinner

INVERCARGILL Grace Presbyterian Church

Happenings:

The focus of the Ladies Bible study has been on "God's Riches" by John Benton and John Peet. Earlier in the year "Christian Community" by Robb Suggs provided the basis for a great study.

For Prayer:

- Give thanks for TAG, the after school programme. It's going well with up to 20 children attending each week.
- Pray for the leaflet drops - there are two of them planned prior to Christmas. Pray that the recipients' hearts will be open and contacts made.
- Pray for the health of our ladies - some are not well at the moment. Pray that God's love and mercy will comfort them in their ailments.
- Pray for the Ladies Bible Studies in both Invercargill & Tuatapere - both are going well.



Some of the gorgeous ladies from the Grace Invercargill Ladies Bible Study

**"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."
Hebrews 10:24**

December 2005

**The Magazine for Women
Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand**

the **+** helper



Inside This Issue...

Beautiful Girls for God at Trinity

Cooking up a Treat at Wyndham

Looking in the Mirror at Covenant

The Helper is a publication of the Christian Education and Publications Committee (CE&P) of the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, through its Women's Sub-Committee.

Any concerns to be addressed to David Bayne

67 Cutts Road, Avonhead, Christchurch

Ph: (03) 342 5354 Email: bayned@consultancyservices.co.nz

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- Nola Young
Redeemer Presbyterian Church

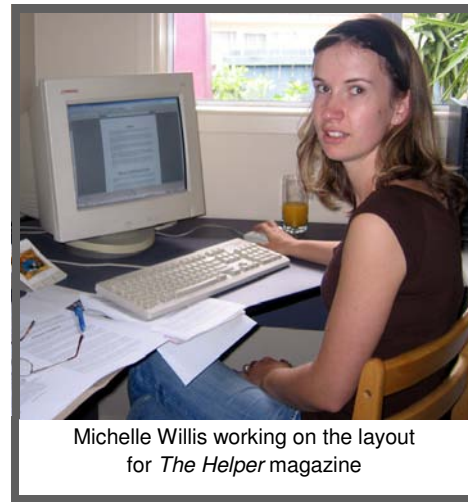
At last! After many delays we have finally been able to put together another issue of *The Helper*. We are truly sorry that it has been so long in coming. Our intentions have been good, but we just haven't been able to get the job done.

Now that it has been done, I must say that I think that all the effort has been

worthwhile. It's been exciting to receive contributions from different people throughout the country, and to learn what has been going on in our churches. There are heaps of things happening – some structured and some not so structured; some involving ones and twos, others whole groups; and some one-off events and others ongoing programmes.

We've decided to publish a selection of activities and events from different churches and regions as a way of wrapping up 2005 and of getting the wheels of *The Helper* moving again. We hope you are encouraged and stimulated by what you read. We also hope you will be stirred to pray for your sisters in the different churches.

The General Assembly of our church has encouraged us (via the Christian



Michelle Willis working on the layout for *The Helper* magazine

Editorial

Education and Publication Committee) to keep on producing *The Helper*. To do that we've set up a new editorial and publication team here in Auckland - made up of myself (Nola), my daughter Katherine, Anne Camp and Michelle Willis. It will be our aim to publish at least two issues in 2006.

To do so, however, we will need your help. Please get out pen and paper and write something for your Church women's magazine. Share with us what you are doing in your church ministries, books you are reading, personal testimonies, blessings and challenges. Let's use *The Helper* as a means of encouraging one another and helping women in GPCNZ become a force for God in our country!

In Brief

Happenings and Prayer Points from around the country

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touch base with each other on a weekly basis, challenging each other in areas of Bible Study, sharing the things they have learnt, and spending time together in prayer. They hope that this will bring great spiritual encouragement to their church as more and more women join this ministry. The Ignite Student Ministry is a really exciting ministry of the church. This year the format of Ignite changed to having separate girls and guys Bible Studies each week and only meeting together for a combined night of teaching and fellowship every 3-4 weeks.

The young women of Grace are able to use this ministry as an opportunity to challenge each other to be young women committed to Christ, as well as reach out and share what they are learning with contacts in their halls of residence and flats. One of the studies they have worked through has looked at being "Connected to God's Family".



For Prayer:

- That the women would be encouraged in the Lord as they meet together in prayer partnerships, and challenged to grow more and more.
- For the young women connected with the Ignite ministry as they head into their summer holiday period. Pray that those leaving town would take what they have learnt and apply it wherever they are serving God in the coming months. Also pray for those remaining who will continue to meet and study the book of James over the summer break.

MILTON

Tokomairiro Grace Bible Church

Happenings:

A Bible study on the books of Habakkuk and Zechariah gave the women of our church a fascinating insight into God's dealings with His people under the Old Covenant. Ruby Brightwell, who led the study, helped us work through the implications of these truths in today's world. Since then, a smaller group has met for prayer and is working through "By Design" by Susan Hunt.

For Prayer:

- For wisdom as they think through the best way to involve as many women as possible in the coming year in Bible study.
- For contacts with unbelievers and opportunities to share the gospel.



GORE

Grace Presbyterian Church

Happenings:

The Gore women's Bible study group has focused on the book of Ruth this year. To help them, they have used a series of tapes by Michael Youssef entitled "A Match Made In Heaven". Michele writes, "We were very encouraged at the blessings of God through the faith and obedience of a new believer. We enjoy listening to Michael Youssef's teaching." His many tape series are available from "Leading The Way Ministries".

Earlier in the year the girls in the teenage Bible study group transformed themselves into "secret angels", showing care and encouragement by sending anonymous gifts and appreciative notes to one another. This group has recently completed a very good discipleship course put out by Summer Beach Project. Their present study focus is on the Doctrines of Grace. They are seeking not only to understand the character of God better, but also to think through the implications of his presence in their lives.

For Prayer:

- For wisdom in knowing how to encourage all the women in the church in their varied and different circumstances.

WYNDHAM

Wyndham Evangelical Church

Happenings:

A study group led by Alison Ure has enjoyed and been challenged by a variety of studies over the past year. They started the year with a study of Philippians called "Jesus Our Joy" by Donald Baker, a Life Guide Bible Study. Another book from the same series on Old Testament Kings written by Carolyn Nystrom provided the basis for another study. "It was very good and I think we all learnt a lot about the Kings and how their faith and lack of it helped shape the nations of Judah and Israel. We talked a lot about the sovereignty of God and I think our faith in God was enlarged as we studied some of these characters and saw God working through them in times of great difficulty and political turmoil. These were good studies," writes Alison. The group is currently studying 2 Corinthians using an old study booklet "Geared for Growth" published by The Worldwide Evangelization Crusade.

For Prayer:

- Give thanks for these studies. Pray for a deepening love for God's Word and a working out of it into daily life.

In Brief

Happenings and Prayer Points from around the country

SOUTH AUCKLAND - Takanini **Trinity Presbyterian Church**

Prayer Points:

- Give thanks for the very encouraging discipleship camps with the teenage girls. Pray that much fruit will come from these
- Pray for future leaders for the boys and girls groups, as well as leaders for the church as a whole.
- A new school hall is currently under construction at Takanini Primary School and is to be made available for use next year. Pray that the temporary arrangements for our Sunday meetings won't hinder ministry or the development of relationships.

SOUTH AUCKLAND - Flat Bush **Redeemer Grace Presbyterian Church**

Happenings:
Women in Redeemer are working alongside men in a variety of ministries. The prime focus is on outreach to children in the community – both on Sunday mornings (“Kid’s Church”) and during the week (homework club, sports ministry and a preschool music group). A women’s Bible study looking at the Sermon on the Mount has just started, as has a discipleship Bible study with two women from the community. On Sunday mornings there is also an ESOL study for three high school girls from China and Korea.

For Prayer:

- For contact with the families of the many children we have connected with in the community.
- For the two women from the area as they study basic discipleship (one of them has just completed an evangelistic Bible study and made a commitment to Christ).
- For the ESOL students, that they would come to a deep commitment to Christ. They will be returning to their homes over the summer. Pray they will be able to speak with their families about the things they have been learning.



WELLINGTON **Grace @ Wellington**

For Prayer:

- Please pray for Glenys Bayne who recently suffered an accident badly affecting her eye and knee. Pray for a speedy and complete recovery.

CHRISTCHURCH **Evangelical Presbyterian Church**

Happenings:

Christchurch’s latest development is a group for the younger girls (8-12year olds) that meets every two weeks on Friday evening for activities and devotions.

For Prayer:

- For this ministry and for those who lead it.

ASHBURTON / FAIRLIE **Evangelical Presbyterian Church**

Happenings:
Food has been a winner in Ashburton this year. The first of our planned Ladies Fellowship evenings featured a soup-tasting event at Lill Hight’s home. Four ladies made soup (and supplied recipes), another brought croutons, and the rest of us employed bowls and spoons! We declared them all delicious. Sandy Hoekstra rounded out the evening with a helpful devotion based on I Corinthians 10:31.



We hope these Ladies Fellowship meetings will bind us together more and more as we share fellowship and benefit from the gifts and skills God has placed in our church. Given that many of us live from half to three quarters of an hour away from Ashburton, meetings like this are valuable to give us a sense of belonging together.

For Prayer:

- Pray that the Lord will use our monthly fellowship meetings to bond women widely scattered throughout the district.
- Pray for health and energy for young mothers in our congregation.
- Give thanks that David Bayne has accepted the call to come and serve Ashburton.
- Pray for Lynda and David as they work out family dynamics involved in this shift from Christchurch and as they prepare for the marriage of their eldest daughter in early January.

DUNEDIN **Grace Bible Church**

Happenings:
Women in the church are being encouraged to have one other person as a spiritual/prayer partner. Partners meet or

Beautiful Girls for God

A Discipleship Sleepover at Trinity



Guest speakers came to help out with each topic. One of these in particular, a makeup artist from Elizabeth Arden, proved a real treat (for both the girls and leaders!). Janina Smith from Providence Presbyterian Church also shared a life-changing testimony.

We had lots of fun including a night swim in a hot pool, sleeping in a tent and waffles for breakfast. To cap it all off, we sent the girls home with a gift bag full of goodies donated by various organisations. We hope and pray that this weekend will help these girls stay close to Jesus throughout their lives and especially over the next few years as they journey through adolescence.

- Michelle Willis
Trinity Presbyterian Church

When the mum of one of our Girls Group girls asked us to help answer her daughter’s questions on puberty (and all that goes along with that stage of life!), we decided it was a great opportunity to have a discipleship weekend. Because of the large number of girls interested in attending, we repeated the programme and had two weekend sleepovers to give more individual attention to each girl who came along.



Each weekend consisted of four studies covering the spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual aspects of life – looking at each from a Christian perspective in a way relevant to teenage girls in our culture.



Expanding Horizons

A Workshop Day for Northern Presbytery Women



Even in my (relatively short) life I have witnessed a dramatic change in attitudes to the place and role of women in society. The 20th Century began with women having only recently been given the vote and being excluded from many areas of life seen as the domain of men, yet only 100 years later, virtually all areas of society are accessible to women (and then some).

As a young Christian married woman with no children as yet, I have found the attitude that women can and should do everything both in the workplace and out to be extremely disturbing. Consequently, I for one was excited and blessed to be able to attend the GPCNZ Northern Presby-

tery Women's Workshop Day held at Covenant Presbyterian Church on 10th September. It looked at issues just like the one I was struggling with. More than 70 women from diverse backgrounds and across the GPCNZ Northern Presbytery attended the conference. With 15 different sessions offered on almost every aspect of a woman's life, it was a banquet of choice for hungry hearts like mine. We were able to pick 3 sessions to attend and almost everyone got her first choice. Leaders had been carefully chosen and each was well suited to the sessions they took.

I personally was incredibly challenged by the "Women in the Workplace" session. I often feel like I'm marching

into battle when I go to work, attempting to be a woman committed to the principles set out in the Bible. How hard it is to find a balance in life when at work you're told "you are more intelligent than a man - set goals and achieve them - don't stop work to have babies if you don't want to - you are the boss of your own body." Contrast this with a biblical attitude of "a woman is to be a helper to her husband - he has been given the role of loving headship over her



and she must submit to him as such." The battle of contrasting views gets pretty tough at times in the workplace.

That's what made it so special to be able to attend the Workshop Day and learn from older Christian women. How much, I wonder, do we younger women value the wealth of wisdom and knowledge that there is, not just in our own mothers, but also in all the older women in our lives and in our congregations? In today's versatile social environment, where it seems anything goes as long as you can justify it in terms of your own personal development, what a blessing it is to be able to tap into so much knowledge in so many specialized areas of a Christian woman's life!



General Assembly

A Woman's View



- Lynda Bayne
EPC Christchurch

Yes, I rejoiced as I attended the Assembly sessions. How glad it made me to see that the Lord has given us godly men to rule over and care for us. The gracious way they deal with each other, and the good-humoured banter that passes across the room as they transact business, is a delight.

The business itself is very interesting. At a General Assembly you get to see the 'behind-the-scenes' work that goes on to promote the peace, purpose and productivity of our churches.

It was especially encouraging this year to have several international guests there - to hear them speak, to get to know them better and to know that we are part of God's global work.

The communion service at the start of the Assembly and the devotions each morning were other highlights. They lifted us up to see the Lord and to be refreshed in serving him.

Hearing what the Lord is doing in various congregations around the country was exciting. It was also a bonus to be able to catch up on ladies from up and down the country.

Let me encourage you to go to the General Assembly of our Church when it is in your area. It is a great spur to love and good works. Next year it will be in Auckland in the July school holidays. D.V. see you there!

In Brief

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SOUTH AUCKLAND - Papatoetoe Providence Presbyterian Church Happenings:

Providence is our newest member church in GPCNZ. Following their Sunday morning worship time and shared lunch the congregation breaks up into study groups. Over the past few months the women have been studying together Richard Pratt's book, "Praying With Your Eyes Open".

For Prayer:

- That the women of the church would be able to encourage and support each other, especially those facing particularly difficult situations.

SOUTH AUCKLAND - Manurewa Covenant Presbyterian Church Happenings:

In addition to the monthly 'Spiritual Mothering' groups (see Page 6 for more details) a group of Covenant women meet each Wednesday morning for Bible study. This year they have studied Ruth and Esther using Navigator Press material alongside a study guide on Esther by

Elizabeth George. They have also looked at "The New Joy of Discovery" by Oletta Wald, a book that looks at how to study the Bible inductively. This term they have studied Cynthia Heald's book, "Becoming a Woman Who Loves".

A Christmas Progressive Supper proved so popular last year that it is going to be held again this year on November 26th. Those participating will be divided into small groups, each of which will visit two different homes before joining everyone back at the church building for a final coffee and sharing time.

For Prayer:

- Give thanks for the real encouragement women have received through the monthly spiritual mothering groups and for the new women wanting to join the programme. Pray that these will continue to be effective in strengthening relationships between all the women within the congregation.



Cooking up a Treat

At Wyndham Evangelical Church

One of our church members, Beverly Smith, runs a popular and very successful Homestay business close to Wyndham. In 2003 she decided to update her skills by attending cooking classes to get new ideas that she could use when entertaining her guests. (She was already a very capable cook!). She even travelled overseas during the winter and went to cooking classes in Italy!



Shortly after her return she suggested to some of the ladies in our congregation that she would be willing to organise an evening prior to Christmas when she would demonstrate some of the skills she had learnt. Beverly would share the recipes and prepare the courses, so that those who attended would enjoy a delicious meal, and also learn how they could present the same meal for their own guests.

Everyone was enthusiastic and invited friends and neighbours, so the quota was quickly filled. Numbers had to be limited, as it was to be held in Beverly's home. At the end of a most enjoyable evening one of our ladies shared devotions prior to supper being served.

The evening proved so successful that many asked if there was going to be

another one like it. Beverly happily agreed to arrange another event and the places were again quickly filled by those who had missed the first night, or others who were keen to learn more.

The men of course got to hear about the great food that their wives were enjoying and asked, "What about us?" So Beverly willingly took up the challenge and arranged a cooking class for the men. (They were really quite excited about it!) She planned recipes that were basic, and relatively easy, to enable the men to take their turn at cooking at home and thus impress their wives and families. Many of these men had previously done little or no cooking and they returned home confident to try out their new skills. (Beverly was a good teacher).

We have now had several of these sessions for the women and many ladies have been delighted to make use of the recipes, confident that they could produce menus that were not too difficult and yet were

bound to impress their guests. (I think some of the men, who missed their evening, are quietly hoping there will be another for them too.)

These evenings have all been friendly, happy occasions with women of all ages attending, and we are very grateful to Beverly for the work she has done. With new faces at each session, we have got to know new people in our community.

- Ann Sinclair
Wyndham Evangelical Church

**"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."
1 Peter 4:10**

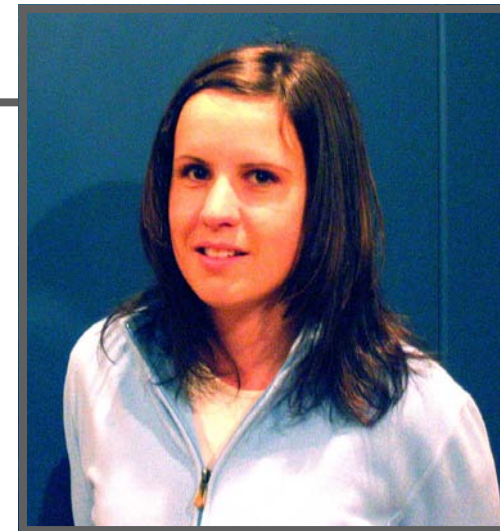


The Workshop Day was extremely well organized. It began with a meet-and-mingle time and an opening Bible reading, prayer and song. We had two sessions in the morning, broke for a most delicious lunch, and then went back into the third and final session in the afternoon. It was a most stimulating and helpful event – one that I can encourage other Presbyteries to consider holding.

Keep up the good work, older ladies! The Lord bless you for your work in His Kingdom.

Workshop Topics included:

- Personal Devotions
- Hospitality
- Raising Boys and Girls
- Training children for worship
- Prayer
- Ministry in the later years
- Bereavement and Grief
- Handling the ups and downs of life
- The challenge of motherhood
- Self-discipline
- Feminism
- Women in the workplace
- Mid-life issues
- Making a 'home'
- Happily Single



- Corina Eldershaw
Covenant Presbyterian Church

Sweet Fellowship

And Women-To-Women Challenge for Southern Presbytery



- Jessica Smith
Grace Bible Church, Dunedin

Reflecting on the Southern Women's Conference held earlier this year, two things come to mind – sweet fellowship amongst sisters in Christ and a deep challenge to my spiritual walk. These things make a day like that something to be truly valued!

There was a buzz in the air throughout the conference as women chatted to women across the hall. There was, though, a different 'buzz' that stayed much longer, even after everything was packed up and everyone had gone home. It was the 'buzz' of being spiritually encouraged.

This encouragement came as we learnt side-by-side, older women next to younger women, mothers next to grandmothers – all connected in Christ and desiring to live our lives to his glory. Ideas were exchanged, and our passions and struggles shared. Time spent in prayer together built a fellowship that spurred us 'on to love and good deeds'. We went home with a renewed vigour to serve Christ in the day-to-day grind.

I also found real value in sitting under the godly teaching of another woman. It says nothing about the fantastic teaching that we receive each

week from our men leaders. But it seemed to add a special dimension of challenge coming from another woman; from someone who knows what it is to submit to those same teachings and who illustrates them in ways that are unmistakable. I was given plenty of food for thought and a renewed passion to go home and seek to live out my role as a woman in the church, in submission to my elders, with a more active and joyful enthusiasm rather than a glum resignation.

Sweet fellowship, sister-to-sister in Christ in the context of good teaching has made our Presbytery Conferences occasions to be valued. We will certainly want to see them repeated as we seek to see the women of Otago and Southland living lives submitted to the glory of God.

More on Spiritual Mothering

At Covenant Presbyterian Church

Encouraged and stimulated by an initial Bible study series on "Spiritual Mothering" written by Susan Hunt, Covenant Women's Ministry Committee decided to make a spiritual mothering programme available to as many women in the congregation as possible. We launched the programme with a special luncheon and explained how the groups would work. Using study material developed for use in Spiritual Mothering Groups in the Presbyterian Church of America, groups of 4-5 women meet once a month to encourage one another spiritually. The studies are based on the Titus 2 passage and a different topic is studied each month (e.g. Loving your Husband, Loving your Children, Contentment etc).



The goal was to have groups made up of women of different ages, single and married, working and stay-at-home mothers, in order to learn from one another, appreciate the different "seasons" of life to which we are called, and to gain an appreciation of

each others gifts and abilities. In order to achieve this we asked all those who wanted to be involved to let us know what days and times they would be available to meet. We prayed the Lord would guide us as we sought to match women up with a spiritual mother, taking into consideration the above goals. Although this proved to be a challenging task, for the most part we have been able to achieve our aim. We also have some younger single girls meeting together fortnightly with an older "spiritual mother".

They also plan to use the same materials as the other groups in the near future.

Currently we have 45 women meeting together regularly. From the feedback thus far, women are finding the groups a blessing and are enjoying exploring what it means to be a godly woman. All the group leaders report that women are eager to share with one another and the material provides a focus for stimulating discussions. We will end the current series with a

mid-winter Christmas celebration and plan to place women in new groups at that time if they are open to that. It will also be an opportunity for new women to join and to invite other friends and contacts along for fellowship together.

It is a great privilege to take time out each month to encourage one another to fulfil the specific roles that the Lord has assigned to us as women, and to use our gifts and abilities for the building up of the body of Christ.

- Anne Camp
Covenant Presbyterian Church

Editor's Note: The material that Covenant has been using is called "Titus Two Teams".

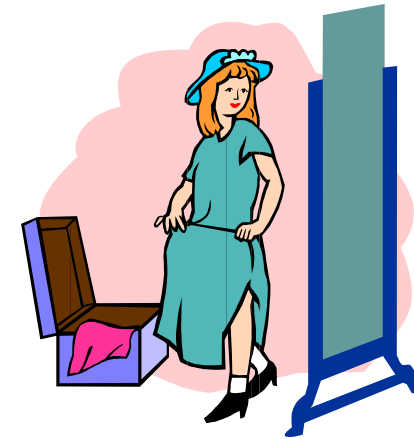
One of the women responsible for developing this material, Gwen Westerlund, has New Zealand connections. She is the daughter of Linleigh and La Verne Roberts who will be known to many of you, especially those in the South.

We have been given permission to reproduce the material here in New Zealand. If any of you would like further information about the programme please contact me (Nola Young).



Looking in the Mirror

At Covenant Presbyterian Church



mines our worth), and popular culture (Hollywood and the images that surround us in music, magazines and movies).

Next we turned to the Scriptures and wrestled with what it means to be a beautiful woman in the eyes of God. To help us in this regard we watched the video "Looking in the Mirror" by Pam Stenzel. Pam is a speaker in much demand in high

"We wrestled with what it means to be a beautiful woman in the eyes of God."

What defines our worth as women? Do we turn to the mirror of God's Word to reveal what it means to be feminine, or are we spending too much time gazing in the mirror of Hollywood? Mothers and daughters from Covenant Presbyterian Church recently met together for an evening of fun and fellowship to discuss these important questions.

Firstly we considered 3 important influences that affect who we are as women – feminism, the "beauty myth" (what we look like and what we wear deter-

"What does our clothing communicate to others?"

schools throughout America as she addresses issues relevant to young women. In this video she brings a message from James Chapter 1 and challenges girls to turn away from Hollywood and focus on Christ and his Word to learn what it means to be a godly woman.

We moved on to consider "What does our clothing communicate to others?"

Several of the church youth group leaders dressed up for us, and while they "modelled" their outfits, we had to say what message they were

communicating. It was a time of great hilarity but powerfully illustrated the point that what we wear speaks volumes without us uttering a word!

Finally we broke into small groups to take the "Modesty Quiz", a series of true/false questions by Nancy Leigh de Moss. This was a great tool to stimulate discussion for both mothers and daughters.

There were a number of handouts and articles to take away and read, as well as a recommended reading list. In one of these articles C. J. Mahaney sums up modesty this way: "Modesty is simply humility in dress. The Christian woman will have a wardrobe that expresses self-control, moderation and restraint... she will dress to show the grace and beauty of womanhood and to reveal a humble heart – not to call attention to herself, flaunt her beauty, impress her peers, or allure men sexually."

- Anne Camp
Covenant Presbyterian Church



"I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God."
1 Timothy 2: 9 & 10

Anyone interested in organising a similar evening can contact Anne Camp to access resource materials.
Email: campo1@xtra.co.nz