

# A New Place

by Allison Flexer

Feeling nervous, I walk into the room. I see some familiar faces, but this is a whole new experience for me. As I watch the women set up tables for the introductory brunch, I contemplate how much I hate arriving early. It's so awkward; I can either choose to sit alone observing everyone else or attempt to strike up conversations with new people. Or even worse, I can have yet another introductory conversation with someone I've already met—but who clearly doesn't remember me. The negative thoughts swirl through my mind as they settle into their usual resting place alongside anxiety and self-doubt.

Why do I feel this strong hesitancy to join a women's Bible study group? Why is this different from my involvement in all the other activities? The stifled truth rises to the surface to greet me. The women who attend morning Bible study groups are in their thirties just like me, yet they are married with children. It bothers me to see these women at a place in their lives where I so desire to be—a place to which God has not yet brought me.

God has been leading me to a few uncomfortable places lately,



A few months ago, I decided to quit my VP-level job at a large company. I need to rest and determine God's direction for my life. As a person accustomed to working fifty hours per week, this mid-morning Bible study scares me. I will certainly be the only person who is single, not a stay-at-home mom, and taking a sabbatical because God asked her to do it. *Dear Lord, what will I have in common with these women?*

As I dread the inevitable conversations about diapers, potty training, and preschools, I recognize some friendly faces as the women arrive. "Allison, are you going to participate in the study this semester? How exciting!" I explain my newfound freedom to Amy, letting her know that my schedule now permits me to participate during the day. She replies, "A few of us attend an

exercise class at the gym on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You should join us." Next, I meet Karen. Not fitting into my stereotype of the typical stay-at-home mom attendee, she has adult children and young grandchildren. She encourages me and affirms my decision to heed God's calling in my life.

Slowly, I realize that regardless of marital or mommy status, these women are not so different from me. As women and followers of Christ, we have similar struggles. We all need a community that will pray with us and encourage us in our Christian walk. We all strive to manage a busy life while living out our faith. Those similarities are enough to overcome our differences.

God often nudges us into uncomfortable areas to accomplish His purpose and to bring about a change of heart. As I reflect on the first day of women's Bible study, I am happy that our Father is bigger than all of my anxieties, insecurities, and hesitations. When God calls us to a new place, He doesn't ask us to go alone. He shows up, reminds us that we are exactly where He asked us to be, and blesses us each step of the way. ◀