

## Relating to Women of Other Faiths

### What are the things we have in common?

- Spiritual outlook on life
- Moral compass
- Scriptures
- Prayer
- Fasting
- Desire to please/honour God/gods
- Awareness of evil
- Attend places of worship
- Bringing up children in the faith
- Dress modestly
- Hospitality

### How can we use these commonalities?

- Ask them questions about their faith even if you think you already know the answers. You can learn a lot about their personal spiritual beliefs
- Talk about your Bible reading and prayer times (avoid unfamiliar jargon)
- Share Scriptures when God has spoken to you
- Show Scriptures from a clean & tidy Bible
- Ask what they did at the weekend so you can then share about your church meeting
- Demonstrate that the church is a community, how that works
- Show them around inside a church and explain the spiritual significance of everything. Anglican churches with stained glass windows are ideal!
- Invite them to attend a church service with you but prepare them for what to expect
- Offer to pray for them or maybe even pray with them
- Discuss marriage – love or arranged? Christian marriages arranged by Father in heaven
- Discuss bringing up children as believers and similar issues you face

The key thing is building a friendship that acknowledges God (or some sense of the divine). Sometimes we think that those with no faith, or a nominal faith will be more open to learning about our faith. That's not always the case. Sometimes it's those who are more open or hungry spiritually who will encounter Jesus in dreams or through reading of Scripture.

### How important is it to know about other faiths?

- Helps to know where they are coming from: their worldview
- Affects the way we explain Christian truth: the things that may be misunderstood or that may be completely incomprehensible.

### **How are Christians/Christianity viewed in their country?**

It also helps if we know a bit about the general religious background in their country. Are they likely to have met Christians before or entered a church building? Is Christianity the major faith in their country, or a small persecuted minority faith?

### **What experience have they had of the supernatural or spiritual powers?**

Exploring this will be very important if you are studying the Bible and looking at what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Final thoughts:

- Start somewhere! Eg Focus on finding out about the religious background of the women you mostly meet, or someone you're developing a deeper friendship with.
- Don't become over-anxious about your lack of knowledge. Let's seek to be better informed, but remember it's the Holy Spirit who brings understanding, who reveals who Jesus is and leads us all on a journey towards knowing God personally.
- Never forget the impact of friendship genuinely offered in the name of Christ.

*Patty McCulloch November 2013*