

SHERRY SURRATT

JENNI CATRON

FOREWORD BY MARK BATTERSON

JUST! LEAD!

A No Whining,
No Complaining,
No Nonsense

PRACTICE GUIDE

For Women Leaders in the Church

A Leadership  Network Publication




JUST LEAD!

**A NO-WHINING, NO-COMPLAINING,
NO-NONSENSE PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR
WOMEN LEADERS IN THE CHURCH**

Sherry Surratt and Jenni Catron

Foreword by Mark Batterson

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FOREWORD



Whenever pastors get together, leadership development is one of the main topics of discussion. We want to know how to develop more and better leaders. The irony is that most churches have a mostly untapped resource of highly capable leaders already sitting in their sanctuary every Sunday morning: women. Regardless of your theology or culture, women can play a major role in leading your church in fulfilling its God-given mission. Many churches struggle in successfully integrating women with strong leadership gifts into an often male-dominated culture. The key question is how men and women can lead together in the context of the local church.

Although we see women in key leadership roles throughout the Bible, the challenges of men and women working together in the context of the local church are real and often complex. That's why I'm excited about this book. I am passionate about seeing leaders, regardless of their gender, grow to their full potential in Christ. I see the difference strong women leaders make every day at National Community Church (NCC), the church I pastor in Washington D.C. We have as many women on staff as we do men. And women have played key leadership roles in all of

our small groups and ministries. We wouldn't be who we are or where we are without their leadership. We'd literally be half the church we are today without their leadership!

I also know firsthand how challenging it can be for men and women to work alongside each other in the local church. We need a leadership field guide to help reach our maximum effectiveness for the Kingdom. Sherry Surratt and Jenni Catron are the ideal leaders to write that field guide. Together they have over forty years of experience leading in a variety of roles in the local church, and they connect with women leaders across the country and around the world. NCC has benefited directly from their wisdom and experience. But more than their experience, their attitude set Sherry and Jenni apart. The bottom line for them isn't to win a theological argument over the role of women but to further the Gospel mission of the local church. They are all about seeing people come to faith and grow into mature disciples, and they want to see women equipped to do their part.

My hope is that churches will use this book as a practical guide in engaging men and women leaders to fulfill their God-given Kingdom mission. I have seen the difference effective women leaders make at both NCC and churches across the country. Regardless of your theological or cultural lens, this is a challenge worth taking on.

Mark Batterson
Senior Pastor
National Community Church
Washington D.C.

PREFACE



This book began a few years ago while both of us were attending a multisite conference at Seacoast Church in Charleston, South Carolina. As is usually the case, I (Jenni) was the only woman among the group from my church. When I was told that I really needed to meet Sherry Surratt, I jumped at the chance. I tracked her down after one of the sessions she was teaching. I was eager to meet this incredibly kind and dynamic female leader whom everyone was raving about. She seemed equally as excited to meet me, and we instantly became friends.

Although we live in different parts of the country, we found ways to connect with one another as often as possible. Our conversations inevitably led us to discussing the burden that we shared in helping to encourage and support other women leaders. We each had countless stories of conversations over coffee (Sherry) or tea (Jenni) with hundreds of other women leaders who were trying to find their way in ministry leadership.

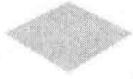
Our hearts ached over the loneliness, isolation, and insecurity that seemed to be holding so many women back from truly leading from their gifts and calling. We longed for the comfort and camaraderie of a safe place—a circle of other women leaders who share the same struggles and joys of leadership.

Just Lead! is the conversation we would have with you if we could sit down together over a cup of tea or coffee. There is much we could share: the joys and pains that we have felt as women leaders, the struggles and successes that we've experienced, and the lessons we wished we could have learned through others rather than learning the hard way.

We believe in you—in your gifts, calling, and purpose as a leader. We believe God has placed you where you lead and wants you to thrive there. We hope this book will be a source of strength, encouragement, some laughs, and perhaps a few tears. We subtitled the book *A No-Whining, No-Complaining, No-Nonsense Practical Guide for Women Leaders in the Church* because we want to equip you to get the job done that God has called you to. Don't let the enemy convince you that you are alone, or misunderstood, or insignificant. Although there are certainly moments that feel that way (we've had our share!), it's simply not true. Most important, we hope that this book will be a reminder to you that you are not alone. You have dear friends and champions who love you, are cheering for you, and are praying over you.

We hope that *Just Lead!* will provide you with practical leadership help to develop the skills to lead yourself and others with the character, confidence, and authenticity of a godly woman. Each chapter addresses a different hurdle that we've encountered as women leaders. We'll share personal stories as well as weave in stories from other amazing women leaders. At the end of each chapter are questions for personal reflection and group discussion. Take the time to reflect on and process each challenge and identify situations in your own leadership where you've encountered this issue. Then find another woman leader or gather a small group of women leaders and discuss a chapter each week over lunch. Our prayer is for this book to be a source of encouragement and hope when you find yourself in challenging moments of leadership. We hope that you will be inspired to *just lead!*

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Jenni Catron

Anything important in life cannot be accomplished without great people around you. That has never been truer for me than in writing this, my first book:

To my amazing husband, Merlyn: you have sacrificed greatly while always, always cheering me on and celebrating every step of this journey. Thank you for understanding and embracing these dreams with me. I love you!

To my family, who taught me some of my earliest leadership lessons and pushed me to be my best in everything, thank you.

To my baby sister, Jessica (aka Hilda), thank you for being the first person I tried to lead and still loving me anyway.

To the leaders who have poured into my life—teachers, professors, bosses, and mentors: Thank you for seeing in me what I couldn't see.

To my “Golden Girls,” Rachel, Sus, and Shelby, who love me the same whether I lead or not, who have watched me grow and been faithful supporters every step of the way. I love you girls dearly!

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To my greatest champions and cheerleaders—Tami Heim, Shannon Litton, Kat Davis, Ashley Warren, and Stephen Brewster: everyone should have someone like you in their life. Thank you for always believing the best.

Sherry Surratt

It is amazing how God places us in the exact right family and circle of friends to provide exactly what we need:

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To my talented son, Mike: you amaze me every day with your brilliance and your dedication to God. I'm proud of you.

To my brilliant daughter, Brittainy, and daughter-in-love, Hilary: you both will change the world with your leadership. Dream big!

To the most amazing granddaughter, Maggie Claire: I hope someday you'll see in yourself what I do: your brilliance, your talent, your potential.

To the women in my life who have inspired and challenged me: Betsy, Lisa, Sibyl, Julianna, Cynthia, Tammy, and so many more. I am grateful to all of you.

From Both of Us

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To the women leaders around the world whom we've connected with via the blog, e-mail, a phone call, hallway conversation, or over a cup of tea: your passion is what made this book possible. You have been a gift to us; this is our gift to you.