



Uniting our hearts in prayer



Finally, Someone to Trust

Elma* had had a difficult life. At age 24, Elma married a disabled man and moved far away to start a new life with his family. From the first day in her new home, she was treated as a slave, doing all the housework, cooking and cleaning as well as caring for the sheep and cows. Her in-laws treated her violently and did not give her proper food. And during this time she had given birth to three daughters, one after another.

When our TWR Women of Hope team in Albania first met her at the National Shelter of Domestic Violence, Elma had no hope in her eyes – only despair. Only one of her daughters was with Elma at the shelter.



Her husband's family had hidden the other two from her after she called the police to denounce the in-laws' violence toward her.

During her stay at the shelter, Elma heard the name of Jesus for the first time. We gave her a solar radio to listen to our *Women of Hope* program. The next time we visited her, she said, "I heard you tell a story on the radio that was quite similar to my story. How can that be possible?" Elma noticed that the lady in the program had chosen to trust God, so she wanted to know more about this God who can change lives and help her escape from her despair and suffering.

When Elma got out of the shelter, we connected her with a local church and went to see her in her new home. She told us: "When you visited us in the shelter, I didn't understand anything, but one thing that stayed with me after you left and even now is that God is my shepherd. I couldn't forget that. Thank you for connecting me with the wonderful ladies from the church. I know I have a long way to become like you, but the good thing is that now I have learned how to pray and where to trust."

– Ledi Hebibasi, Albania National Coordinator

2025

JANUARY
Lifting up women of Europe in prayer

FEBRUARY
Praying for the spiritual lives of women

Encouraging a new generation in Portugal

A Matter of the Heart
from Director Susie Pek

Living the Empowered Life
A Word of Hope

Hope & healing in Jesus for women

* Name changed for security reasons.

January

1. Lord, give wisdom and creativity to the team producing the *Hidden Treasures Part 2* audio drama. May the drama bless those who have left prostitution and are now following you in a new life. (2 Cor. 5:17)
2. Lord, as our team in Albania minister to women leaving situations involving domestic violence, enable them to introduce these women to Jesus and connect them with local churches and organizations that can help. (Heb. 13:16)
3. Father, help Christian women in Croatia connect with one another for support, fellowship and strengthening of their faith to face their daily challenges. (1 Thess. 5:11)
4. Lord, we ask you to comfort girls in Denmark who are confused about their gender. Guide them to embrace the identity you gave them. (Gen. 1:27)
5. Lord, we praise your faithfulness as Finland celebrates its 25th anniversary of TWR Women of Hope. We give thanks for over 90 prayer groups around the country. (Lam. 3:22-23)
6. Father, we ask for protection of Christians and Jews in France who are being attacked or killed because of their faith. May those with

hate-filled hearts be changed by you. (Ps. 140:1)

7. God, we pray that victims of human trafficking who work in Germany's red-light districts receive help to start a new life in freedom. (Ps. 119:134)
8. May the people of Greenland be set free from alcohol and drugs, which destroy their families and leads to abuse and suicide. Jesus, penetrate their darkness with your light. (John 8:12)
9. Many teenage girls in the Netherlands struggle with depression. May they receive the help they need and find true comfort and rest in Jesus. (Matt. 11:28)
10. Father, set women from the North Caucasus free from societal and familial judgment, giving them courage to openly follow Christ and testify to their faith. (Isa. 41:13)
11. May the *Precious and Beloved* program reach the hearts of women in North Macedonia to bring hope, healing and freedom, especially among those of the dominant religion. (Ps. 34:18)
12. May Norwegian Christians warmly welcome immigrant women who face language and cultural barriers, isolation and discrimination. (Lev. 19:34)
13. Lord, grant wisdom and discernment to the rulers and political opposition in Poland so that they may cooperate and lead this nation. (Jer. 29:7)

14. We pray, Lord, for fair compensation in employment and increased opportunity in society for women in Portugal. (Ps. 34:15)

15. As divorce increases in Romania, Father, help couples on the verge of separation fight to save their families successfully. (Mark 10:9)

16. God, may women in Russia seek a personal relationship with you, grow in their faith and find comfort and strength in you for their lives. (Eph. 3:16)

17. Lord, bring peace and harmony to families in Serbia. May women recognize their worth and potential in Christ and be bearers of love, understanding and faith. (1 Pet. 3:9)

18. As suicide rates rise in Spain, we ask, Father, that young women learn to protect their minds from the unrealistic standards of social media. (Ps. 147:3)

19. We pray, Lord, for orphans in Albania and children abandoned by their parents. May the church provide them love and introduce these children to Jesus. (Deut. 10:18)



20. Father, please use the program *Arise and Shine* to touch, encourage and strengthen the hearts of women in Belgium and the Netherlands to openly live out their faith. (Isa. 60:1)

21. May women in Croatia recognize their worth in Christ, be set free from fears and insecurities, and step into the freedom and confidence that comes from him. (Matt. 10:31)

22. May women in Denmark who live in fear of rejection, abuse, loneliness, hunger or homelessness trust in you, God, to be their defender, provider and hope. (Ps. 18:2)

23. Father, break the stronghold of drug and alcohol abuse in the Faeroe Islands and restore the families torn apart by these substances. Help people to find love and healing in you. (John 3:16)

24. A 2021 poll showed that over half the citizens of France no

DANISH TEAM MEMBERS



OUR VISION

Bringing hope and healing in Jesus to women around the world and across generations



longer believe in God and see Christianity as irrelevant. Strengthen true believers to engage nonreligious people with God's love and truth. (Luke 18:8)

25. We praise you, God, for the German intercessors who pray faithfully with the prayer calendar and for donors who enable us to support the *Women of Hope* program in different languages. (Phil. 1:3-5)

26. May Norwegian women see the value of gathering in prayer groups, sharing joys and sorrows, praying for one another, and interceding for women around the world. (Matt. 18:20)

27. Heavenly Father, we pray that Polish school curricula would promote the family model that is in accordance with your will. (Matt. 19:4-5)

28. Lord, may Portuguese women who feel overwhelmed while trying to reconcile family and professional life find their rest in you as they look to your Word for guidance. (Matt. 11:29)

29. In this difficult economy, Lord, give Romanian women wisdom to manage their resources well and to understand that you are the source of all blessings. (James 1:17)

30. Father, grant wisdom to our team in Serbia as they write and produce programs. May they choose topics that will positively change the lives of women who listen. (James 1:5)

31. Lord, may women in Spain who are alone, without resources and wish to continue with their pregnancies find the support they need. (Ps. 32:8)

February

1. Lord, may new believers in Albania be disciplined within their local churches so that they can mature and grow in their relationship with you. (Matt. 28:19)

2. God, may Christian women leaders in Benin who are persecuted because of their faith hold fast to you and be bold and courageous. (2 Tim. 3:12)

3. Father, destroy the religious spirit and stronghold of legalism in Botswana that hinders Christians from experiencing loving intimacy with you. (2 Cor. 10:4-5)

4. Father, may Brazilian Christian women long to know you and your Word, desire to imitate Jesus' life and teachings, and testify of your salvation. (2 Tim. 3:15-17)

Encouragement and hope to a new generation

If you're a woman, regardless of where you live in the world, you've probably felt affected by some of these issues: gender fairness in employment, reconciling work and family, gender-based violence, fairness in health and education, cultural prejudices and gender stereotypes. Portugal is no exception, for these are the main difficulties affecting women here also.

TWR Women of Hope began in Portugal in 2007 and was called Project Hannah at that time. Although it began timidly as a radio program with a team of only two people, it quickly became a reference program for women that was broadcast on 11 secular FM radio stations.

In 2020, even during the pandemic, the ministry grew and had a great impact. We became a five-person team, four of whom are volunteers. The programs have gone from 30 to 15 minutes, and the topics covered are aimed at a younger age group that is making crucial life decisions.

At the moment, our team has eight women, and the *Women of Hope* program is on six FM radio stations. The number of stations has been reduced due to high broadcasting costs. We are also on audio platforms such as Spotify,

Google podcast, TWR360, YouTube and TWR Portugal's web radio.

Every two months we hold online prayer meetings with women from different parts of the country, during which we pray through the global prayer calendar.

We actively reach out over the social networks Instagram, Facebook and TikTok because approximately 80% of women in Portugal regularly use social media. These play an important role in communication, entertainment and information.

We want to be where women can see, hear and meet us, bringing a message of encouragement and hope in Christ. Portugal is a religious country, with a strong Catholic heritage that has shaped many aspects of its culture, society and history. As in the rest of Europe, there is a growing trend toward secularization and religious diversity, especially among younger people.

It's time to use all the tools at our disposal to convey the message of the good news, to show women that they are loved, that they are not alone, and that Christ's love can reach them regardless of who they are, where they are or what they do.



By **Sónia Simões**
Portugal National Coordinator

JOIN US FOR
OUR VIRTUAL
prayer
gathering

JANUARY 9

Susie Pek on
A Matter of the Heart

FEBRUARY 6

Raquel Anderson
of Revive Our Hearts
ministry

Sign up at twrwomenofhope.org/events

5. The women of China's Hui ethnic group generally have low status in their communities. Lord, may the gospel penetrate and transform their lives. (Gal. 3:28)
6. As Christian families in the Congo face rising mental-health issues, may they look to you, Lord, and be open to counseling that provides healing and support. (Rom. 12:2)
7. May Christian women in Denmark gain wisdom from you, God, to discern true preaching from false so their faith remains strong. (Matt. 7:15-16)
8. May women immersed in Christian ministry and leadership in the Dominican Republic depend totally on your power and grace, Lord. (2 Cor. 12:9)
9. May women in Eswatini discover their spiritual gifts and talents and use them to serve you, God, and influence their families, community, politics and country. (Prov. 31:26)
10. Lord, strengthen and give hope to young Ethiopian mothers who have been deserted by their husbands and are raising their children alone due to fistula. (Isa. 40:31)
11. Many young women in Finland are interested in spirituality but seek it in sources other than Christianity. Lord, give our leaders the opportunity and wisdom to guide these women to you and your Holy Spirit. (Matt. 5:16)
12. God, we pray that migrant women in Germany hear about Jesus and get encouragement in their spiritual growth from German churches. (Rom. 10:17)
13. Strengthen Indonesian believers who have experienced terrorism from extremists associated with the dominant religion. Father, enable these believers to remain steadfast in their faith. (1 Cor. 15:58)
14. Through intimate communion with God, may Japanese Christian women bear spiritual fruit, mature in their faith and in the knowledge of Christ, and become like him. (Eph. 4:11-16)
15. May Korean Christian women ministers make daily time with you, God, a top priority and be an example in their lives and characters to lead others. (Eph. 6:10)
16. Empower Mongolian Christian women, God, to use your Word to bring their children to spiritual maturity and prepare them to be true followers of Jesus. (Deut. 11:19)
17. Christians in Myanmar frequently encounter persecution due to ongoing civil unrest. Lord, please protect them, provide safe shelter and strengthen them with your presence. (Ps. 91:1-2)
18. Despite living in the Western world where people are free to attend church, many women in the Netherlands struggle to make time to worship the Lord. Pray that they will devote their lives to Jesus. (Joel 2:13)
19. God, help Norwegian Christian women to seek time in your Word daily, letting it guide and transform their lives. May your Word shape their attitudes and actions. (Ps. 119:105)
20. Lord, empower church leaders in Papua New Guinea to promote unity and reconciliation as they facilitate dialogue and peace among conflicting groups and communities. (Eph. 4:3)
21. Father, we pray that Christian women in Portugal will hunger and thirst for you. May you draw them to your Word and to intimacy with you. (Ps. 19:7-11)
22. Father, strengthen Romanian Christian women to rightly prioritize their lives so they may live according to your will and have a godly influence on their families, churches and communities. (1 Pet. 3:1-6)
23. Pray for inner-city churches in South Africa to reach out to those living around them, especially single mothers, offering them hope in Jesus. (Phil. 2:4)
24. Awaken Christians in Spain, Lord, to see the opportunities you are providing to have meaningful spiritual conversations with people around them. (Eph. 2:10)
25. God, strengthen women in the Tanzanian islands to stand firm and not be shaken in their faith as they face intimidation to convert to a different religion to gain employment. (Gal. 5:1)
26. Lord, we pray for leadership development and theological education for church leaders in Timor-Leste. Empower them with knowledge and resources to effectively address modern challenges. (2 Tim. 2:2)
27. In Uruguay, families selling drugs to make a living results in young people dying in drug disputes. Destroy the stronghold of drugs, Father, and open their eyes to your better way. (Eph. 6:13-18)
28. Lord, grant ethnic minority Christians in Vietnam unshakeable faith and courage to stand firm against threats and coercion, resisting pressure to renounce their faith and return to traditional beliefs. (Isa. 41:10)





A Matter of the Heart

God knows if we're standing on the inside

I will never forget this story about a boy and his teacher. As class was moving along, little John was misbehaving. Ms. Meacham had tried to reason with him, but he just would not cooperate. After what felt like hours of trying to get the boy to follow the rules, little John finally gave in and took a seat. That would seem to indicate the boy at last understood the importance of behaving in class – if it weren't for the words that followed: "Ms. Meacham, I may be seated outside, but inside, I'm still standing."

That story resonates with me for several reasons. For one, being a teacher myself, I've had to deal with several Johns – both kids and adults – who were simply unwilling to cooperate. However, it's much deeper than that. If we are honest about it, all of us have behaved just like little John more often than we'd like to admit. Our words and behaviors may not always be in tune with how we are feeling inside. We may be doing all the right things, but inside we are still standing – in other words, our hearts are not in tune.

As we start a new year, we often evaluate the quality of our lives. We take different points into consideration, such as our professional development, time management, quality of our

relationships and so forth. I wonder if we ever reflect on our motives. Why do we do what we do? Why do we say the things we say?

As we ask ourselves those questions, we are pointed in one direction: It's all about our hearts. As Proverbs 4:23 tells us, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Though we usually associate hearts with love, our hearts hold much more than love. It is there that we hold grudges, nourish vanity, welcome anxiety and nurture evil desires. As Jesus says in Matthew 15:18-19, "But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts – murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander."

Our hearts play a key role as they hold the greatest passions and loves that will drive our whole lives. The whys to our actions and reactions are found in the treasure of our hearts. The matter of the heart matters! And it matters to the Lord. "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart'" (1 Sam. 16:7).

Our God sees our hearts. He knows whether we are sitting or standing inside. "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind," Jeremiah 17:10 says. He knows us better than ourselves! He perceives our thoughts from afar, he knows our words before we articulate them and he discerns our motives. Isn't that wonderful? We walk before the Lord fully aware that he knows everything there is to know about us, and, amazingly, he still loves us. As a response to his love, we can choose to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind," as Jesus says (Matt. 22: 37).

Out of our love for him, we surrender our hearts to his scrutiny: "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139: 23-24). And we offer him the best part of ourselves: "May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer" (Ps. 19:14).

I'm so thankful that you have a heart for the women to whom TWR Women of Hope ministers. And I pray that your heart will be filled with his joy and peace throughout 2025.





“The secret of the easy yoke, then, is to learn from Christ how to live our total lives, how to invest all our time and our energies of mind and body as he did. We must learn how to follow his preparations, the disciplines for life in God’s rule that enabled him to receive his Father’s constant and effective support while doing his will.”

– DALLAS WILLARD in
*The Spirit of the Disciplines:
Understanding How God
Changes Lives*

I think we all struggle with how to realistically live in a way that pleases God. We desire to imitate Jesus’ life of devotion to the Father and his love of others, but where is the power to live as Jesus did?

The opening quote refers to Matthew 11:28-30, in which Jesus tells us to

take his yoke, be joined to him, watch him and allow him to teach us how to live. And what we discover as we are yoked together with him is that the power to do the things Jesus did came through the lifestyle he lived.

Jesus lived a radical life of total devotion to the Father. It involved the discipline of his body and mind, submission of his will and complete surrender to the Father. Willard says, “Spiritual growth and vitality stem from what we actually do with our lives, from the habits we form, and from the character that results.”

We see Jesus’ life in the gospels as a model of his lifestyle, habits and character. Although his life of total devotion to the Father brought much suffering, it also brought intimacy, communion and joy with him.

As we look at Jesus’ lifestyle, we see he practiced the spiritual disciplines of prayer, silence and solitude, studying and meditating on the Word, simple and sacrificial living, and service to others. Although people can practice these disciplines in a legalistic manner, Jesus did so with a

purpose and intent to see and hear the Father. And we can do the same.

During the COVID lockdown of 2020, I was introduced to and began practicing the spiritual disciplines of silence and solitude, reflective Bible reading and meditation, prayer and fasting, and Sabbath keeping. Saying that my relationship with God was revolutionized is an understatement. As I purposefully slowed my life down to listen to God, I began to hear his still, small voice. As I approached the Scripture with listening ears and meditated on a verse or two, the Word came alive in a new way. Times of silence and stillness before the Father brought rest to my soul, and I gained a new understanding of why Jesus often went off to lonely places to pray.

Two books that I highly recommend for learning and practicing the spiritual disciplines are *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, by Richard J. Foster, and *Silencio: Reflective Practices for Nurturing Your Soul*, by Stephen A. Macchia.

A word of caution of what this lifestyle is not: This is not trying to live

a perfect life through sheer willpower; rather, it is a stilling of ourselves before God and coming before him in devotion and love for the purpose of knowing him and his heart.

And be assured, you will fail in your attempts to be surrendered to him. Just in the last few days, I have failed in body, mind and will to live fully devoted to God. Gently he reminded me of my sin, granted me forgiveness and told me to put the yoke on again and keep my eyes on Jesus. No condemnation – just the encouragement of his presence that we are doing this together and that the Spirit within us can give us strength. We are not alone!

The spiritual disciplines enable us to position ourselves to seek God’s heart and presence in order to deepen our relationship with him. We are not demanding that he meet with us but are humbly offering ourselves to our God, who is worthy. May we learn to commune with God and deepen in our love and surrender toward him as we choose to live like Jesus did.