



Sisters in Christ

Women's Ministry in Ehattesaht

The Ehattesaht First Nation is based on the west coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

By Jessica Pixner

THROUGHOUT THE PAST SIX YEARS, I have had the opportunity to visit Ehattesaht many times to share God's love and form some wonderful relationships. A woman connecting with other women has always been a natural way for me to share God's love with others. And together with other female staff and volunteers,

God has used us to connect specifically with the women of this community in a unique way—like sisters!

It all began with hosting Ladies Spa Nights. We would invite women of all ages from the community out for an evening of conversation, doing each other's nails,

and prayer to help foster relationships over a common interest. As trust was formed and relationships developed, we wanted these evenings to be more Christ-focused. So we began to purposefully set aside more time for prayer and devotions focused in God's Word. Our time together has become more meaningful with each gathering.

At our recent ladies event in the fall we focused on a story of a woman who learned to turn to God's Word during her times of struggle and give her problems over to God. It was a relevant topic for our small group, and as our conversation continued, we talked about the idea of being "sisters in Christ" and what that meant. We wrapped up the evening by decorating encouragement mugs for each other. It was a creative and tangible way for us

to encourage each other and be a daily reminder of God's promises. We used Bible verses, designs, pictures, and lots of colour as we shared some laughs and continued the conversation, too.

But what really made this night special was the bond in our group. It brought a sense of trust, care, love and oneness that comes from being united through Christ. It allowed us to be vulnerable as we shared personal stories and struggles, discussed God's Word, asked tough questions, and built each other up in faith! It was clear that God used and continues to use these opportunities to connect women of this community with His love and each other as sisters through Christ.

There is a song we sing at church that describes it beautifully, "*and assembled as one, in the name of the Son, lifting hearts, lifting hands, celebrating as friends and proclaiming the Lord, all our praises afford. We are brothers and sisters in Christ.*" That's exactly what happened that evening and what we've been seeing more and more in this community, the gathering together of sisters with Christ at the centre.

Jessica Pixner works with B.C. Mission Boat to help share God's love.

When the group of us prayed together that evening in Ehattesaht, we tried something called a popcorn prayer. If you haven't tried it before, it's where one person starts the prayer out loud and when they finish, the next person who wants to pray can *pop* in. It continues this way until there is a long pause, and then someone ends the prayer. I started off the prayer and when Eleanor took her turn next, she said, "POP" and then continued with her prayer. Saying "POP" was a fun new twist on the regular popcorn prayer, but we all loved it so much that each of us did the same thing before we took our turn to pray. Our friend Sheila enjoyed it so much I decorated a reminder of it right on her mug.



Though this phrase was our funny saying for the evening, it has turned into something that has kept our little group connected throughout the year, too. When one of us has a prayer request we'll post "POP" on our Facebook timeline, or send it in a message to the group as our way of letting each other know that we need prayer for something.

The next time you gather with your family or friends to pray, try out our new version of the popcorn prayer to make it fun and see where the prayers and conversations go! And if you ever have a prayer request, feel free to POP us a line and we would be happy to pray with you.

Jessica