



'In Mary Sumner's Footsteps'

A programme of discussion and
planning for Mothers' Union members
2018

(Part 1)

In Mary Sumner's Footsteps 2018 (part 1)

Each year, we receive a recommended theme from Mary Sumner House, our headquarters in London, which can be used to inspire our prayers, our worship and our activities. This year's title is 'In the Footsteps of Mary Sumner' and so our resources for 2018 will focus on the example of our founder, and on the core principles of Mothers' Union; **listening to God** and **each other**, and having determination to take **steps of faith** as we journey together in **response to His call**.

2018 is a significant year for Mothers' Union, with our triennial elections and the beginning of global conversations throughout the Provinces to inform our way ahead. As we look to the future we want to build on our heritage, and in particular, the life and vision of our founder.

Mary Sumner was a woman of deep faith, with a heart for prayer and a determination to make a difference in the lives of others. She listened to God and acted upon his call.

Contrary to what is often assumed, she was an older woman, a grandmother, when she took the first steps which eventually led to the establishment of Mothers' Union. She was not a natural speaker, but her faith and resolve to follow God's call to make a difference to families and society, laid the foundations for today's worldwide movement.

1. Listening to God

- Mary Sumner spent time in prayer before every meeting she attended. She said: *'Prayer brings Christ's influence. From prayer we shall derive confidence'*. When we pray together in our Branch, do we remember to ask for God's guidance in all our activities?
- Mary Sumner focussed on 'the glorious task of winning the nation's homes for Christ' She said: *'If only we would expect great results and answers to our prayers, we should win hundreds of hearts and homes that now seem impossible, for the days of miracles are not over'*. Do we always plan our Branch programmes and activities with this in mind?

2. Listening to each other

- Mary Sumner said: *'It must be clearly understood that each member is asked to carry out the principles of the Society in her own home and it is well to depend as much upon individual work as upon meetings'*. Do we give each member a chance to share and utilise their personal skills and gifts?
- Mary Sumner said: *'There is special need for enlisting the interest and help of the young mothers of today, for they have to meet the many new problems both in religious and in social questions, and their advice and co-operation is of the greatest use in dealing with these difficulties'*. Do we ever think of asking them about their concerns and ideas?

Prayers to use in the weeks ahead:

Speak to us, Lord, as we draw near to you.

Still our restless thoughts and calm our active minds.

Quieten our spirits to hear your gentle voice.

Open our ears to hear of your love; open our hearts to
perceive your will.

Give us your grace to heed your words and follow where
you lead.

Speak to us, Lord, for your servants are listening. Amen

Almighty and loving God, take our faith, weak though it
is.

Kindle the sparks of life within us

and fan a new flame within our hearts.

And so may we set out with renewed purpose,

resolved to live and work for you,

in the assurance that you are with us, now and always.

Great is your faithfulness,

from one generation to another.

Thanks be to God. Amen

*[From 'Annual Theme Resources 2018', Mary Sumner
House]*