

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A STRONG MEN'S MINISTRY AT CHURCH

A COUNT-DOWN FOR ESTABLISHING A MEN'S MINISTRY

1. Pray for a few men with whom you can meet.
2. Pray for a clear purpose and strategy and for unity among the men of the church.
3. Develop a mission statement (consult with the pastor).
4. Ask the pastor to preach a series of sermons on issues relevant to men, introducing the men's ministry, its mission, and purpose.
5. Schedule a men's ministry special event within 2-4 weeks of the Men's Ministry Sabbath. Use the enthusiasm to start men's small groups and to invite them to plan to attend an upcoming men's convention/retreat.

STEPS TO GETTING STARTED

STEP ONE: Pray for Guidance

Pray for guidance, and that the Lord will help you select a few good men to plan and lead.

STEP TWO: Invite Men to an Organizational Meeting

Set a date and invite these few good men to join you for a couple hours of prayerful planning.

STEP THREE: Hold Organizational Meeting

Your purpose in this meeting is threefold:

- First, to develop a statement of purpose for having your gathering of men. Keep in mind that this statement should satisfy the question, "Why a men's ministry?" Make it a short, simple, and spiritual statement that focuses on growth and God's purpose for men.
- Second, to affirm and build the core group that will be key to the success of the ministry.
- Brainstorm some ideas to get men involved

Use the "*Art of Brainstorming*" to develop some good ideas for the life of your group. Here's how to make this process work for you.

- Brainstorming is offering all kinds of suggestions for the men's group. (Be sure you have someone to write the ideas down on a chalkboard or white marker board—and it should be someone who can write fast!). No one is to react to any idea negatively. In other words, if someone says, "Wouldn't it be a good idea to have a skydiver drop in with a special telegram from the governor?" you don't laugh or say, "that's silly!" Rather, you just keep the ideas flowing. The faster the better, and what happens is fascinating: The imaginative mind seems to come unlocked, and a stream of ideas flows out.
- Finally, when you have exhausted the ideas, you then review and rank them. Select your favorites and then develop the logistics of how the idea can work best for your situation. Pencil

in events on specific dates as a “tentative” or “first draft” concept. As you finesse your ideas you will have a whole list of possibilities and the well will never run dry for inspiring things to do.

- If you come to a sticky point or have difficulty, simply pause, and have prayer. Pray specifically that the Lord will give your ideas which will bless your men and lead them to a realization of their need to grow as Men of God.

STEP FOUR: Communicate Plans with Church Board and Pastor

Follow whatever process your church uses to carry out its programs. In most cases, this means plans need to be submitted to the church board for approval. The pastor can give guidance regarding what course to take and what he is comfortable with. In seeking the approval of the board (or whatever authority), be sure to explain the purpose of the men’s ministry. The impressions people form will largely be positive if you assure and reassure that the purpose is to help men grow in their roles as husbands, fathers, and pillars of the church.

STEP FIVE: Schedule Men’s Ministry Launch During Church

Request time during the Sabbath service to make a special presentation to the congregation. Describe the mission and purpose of the group and then hand out your calendar of events. Make sure that each event is well planned.

IDEAS FOR SUCCESS

MAKE SURE TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL EMPHASIS AT ALL EVENTS

Keep your group focused on the spiritual goal of making “Men of God.” Prayer, and the conscious presence of the Lord, must be an integral part of each event. Even the recreational and social events should have a rich ingredient of prayer and Christ-centered conversation. Avoid the low road of gossipy dialogues, or trivial, close-to-edge jokes. Always lead on the high road.

- Make Christ the unseen guest at every event and verbalize your pleasure in His presence. He will make His presence real in our conversations, our mirth, and all our fellowship.
- Set a goal that after every event, each man will leave with a lighter heart, lifted spirit, and fully encouraged to live for Christ in his home and at his work.
- When a church has a group of men who consistently build each other up in their faith, a bonding of friendship and Spiritual support takes place. Each event, each gathering will become a golden chapter in our memories.

ENGAGE YOUR FAMILIES

It is very, very important that men’s ministries not become another event that takes men away from their families. In other words, for wives and families to be supportive of this ministry, they must see concrete evidence that the gathering achieved its goal. Their man must return home refreshed and recharged to walk as Christ in the presence of his family. The more the family experiences this, the more they are going to appreciate the time he spends with the men. This is not just “men being boys and

having fun,” rather it’s “men who have come together to build better men for the sake of better relationships at home.”

DEVELOP A MEN’S SONG BOOK

Develop a list of special songs to sing together. Have a musical person lead out with a guitar, piano, or even without accompaniment. Use songs that especially speak to men about consecration, the home, sacrifice, and building strength in the Lord. Create out your own booklet of songs on a word processor and print them in a neat format for your group.

MAKE A BIBLE MEMORIZATION LIST

Use one of your meetings to create a list of Bible promises that encourage men to trust in God’s love. Encourage the men to fortify their hearts and their commitments by memorizing these promises and recalling them when needed during the day. Provide a “promise report” time during each meeting. This is a time for sharing how the words of Scripture “popped into my mind just when I needed it.”

CREATE A MEN’S LENDING LIBRARY

Ask the church to purchase a few books for men each month. These might be books that pertain to relationships in a Christian home, family worship, strengthening a marriage, parenting, or any other subject that helps men live the new life in Christ. Catalogue the books and loan them to the men at your meetings. Set aside a time for book reports at each meeting. Regularly hold up a book during Sabbath services so that your men will be aware of the good books that are available.

ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP AT HOME

Frequently speak about the holy calling of men as priests of the home. Speak in positive ways of the man preparing himself daily with prayer and Bible study. One minister occasionally calls a man up on the platform during the worship service (having arranged with him beforehand, of course) and in an interesting way interviews him on his method of family worship and elicits such things as the great blessing worship is to the family. Sometimes a wife can add a lot by simply adding how encouraging and strengthening it has been to the marriage and family since “Jim” has been leading out with worship. Some pastors do this often in conjunction with the children’s story. Following the children’s story, sometimes a set of parents is called up to the microphone and each offers a short prayer for every home, the school, and each child. The simple, earnest prayer of a mom and a dad can settle a cloud of God’s glory on a congregation.

Sometimes grandparents may be invited to come right after the story and read a blessing for the children and each home represented in the congregation. When men come forward and give a testimony of their leadership activities at home it spreads throughout the congregation. The more we present these witnesses and their testimonies, the more compelling it becomes for each man to become the spiritual leader in his own at home. Testimonies are a powerful force to building Godly homes.

PLAN A SPECIAL FATHER-SON/FATHER-DAUGHTER CAMPOUT

Plan a weekend campout just for fathers and kids. Have a campfire with lots of great, inspiring stories.

- Include a time when each father takes his own child or children for a “Memory Hike.” At some point in the hike the father sits down with his children and very thoughtfully shares how much God really loves them and how much the loves them too.
- This is a good time for Dad to talk about the meaning of each child’s name and share some of the feelings he had when he looked at them for the first time. If Dad takes this opportunity to share his personal testimony and describe how God is leading in his life, and then invite each child to rededicate their heart to God, the “Memory Hike” could well become a spiritual pillar in the life of each child.
- You will want to use a few minutes in several of your men’s meetings to plan for this hike. Have the men practice their testimony and their words of encouragement on each other.
- Also, let Mom know the approximate time this will take place so they can be on their knees in prayer at that time.

HOLD A SPECIAL MEN’S COMMUNION

Hold a special communion service for your men. This can take place on a Friday night or early Sabbath morning, or even on a Sunday morning following a light breakfast.

- Discuss the significance of submission, discipleship, and the value of strong brotherly love. Have large cups of grape juice, and giant thick biscuits of unleavened bread that will need to be broken and shared.
- Set up an old rugged cross and sing some carefully selected music. Create an atmosphere of quiet, non-rushed, contemplative sequence of events. Have the men read Psalms together, and maybe choose some Psalms to be read by one group and then another antiphonally. Sing “The Lord’s Prayer,” or “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” to close the meeting. There may be those who want to share their feelings about their wife or family and express their desire to adorn them with their love. When they wash each other’s feet ask them to especially pray for each other’s marriage and family. Have them take the time to share with each other specific burdens relating to the family.

CREATE MARRIAGE CAPSULES

Some time ago I read about this gift idea, and I thought it might be creatively incorporated into one of our men’s events. Purchase a large enough supply (52 for each man) of large size gelatin empty capsules. You can inform the men that they should bring a certain amount of money to cover the cost of this activity. Have a selection of at least 52 one-liners printed on a sheet of paper such as:

- One night’s freedom from dishwashing
- One pizza for the evening of your choice
- One good, long walk together
- One new outfit of your choice
- One new nightgown of my choice

You can come up with a large variety of “gifts” in a reasonably short time. Some will involve money, many won’t. But each involves togetherness. Provide a sheet with the 52+ one-liners on it and a pair of scissors for each man. Have each man choose 52 and roll ‘em up and insert ‘em into the capsules. Put the pills into in a neat little bottle with a label that reads, “RX from Dr.[your name] for [your wife’s

name]. To prevent the dulling of marriage, take one capsule every week for the next year.” Half the fun is watching the wife fight off the urge to open all the capsules at once!

Some men may choose to write up some of their own one-liners. After all, he knows his wife best and he might tailor his treats to the delights that are unique to her. Encourage each couple to choose a certain time each week when they can be together as she opens one capsule.

SCRIPTURE PRESCRIPTIONS

Divide the men into teams of three and invite each man to select a Scriptural passage that best describes the other two men in his group. As the men share the verses with each other – and explain why they selected them – the men in your ministry will see each other, and themselves, much better. They will also quickly see how much God loves them.

These are just a few ideas for getting a meaningful Men’s Ministries going in your church. But please do not delay! Get your men started on the upper road to becoming what God wants for them. We like the way Stu Weber put it:

“Men, you and I need to own for ourselves that same clarity of vision that so marked the life of Christ. We need to give ourselves up for our brides and the Bride as He did. So that the family might live well..... There’s a world out there that needs some Tender Warriors. It’s every man’s purpose... every woman’s dream... and every child’s hope. It’s the definition of a man. I want to head up that road. My prayers are with the men of this conference as we plan in our respective churches. I believe God has some wonderful things in store for us and our families that will be the result.”