

Don't Be Afraid to Start Small

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I was recently asked, "What if only two men show up?" My answer. "Start with those two."

When I first began to work in Men's Ministry, which today I refer to as Ministering to Men – for that is what we are really doing – I was disappointed if 100 men didn't show up for an event. Especially for a church who had a membership of over 2000 with about 800-1000 men connected in some way with the church. Many times, only 20-30 men would show up for monthly activities and often the numbers were even lower. We even planned events that we thought would interest men. The Boomer generation was the primary group attending and not all of them were coming. In addition, I could not understand why the younger men did not attend. I felt as if I had failed.

As I began to study the culture and what men are looking for I began to realize the way we were doing men's ministry was not working anymore. What we had done for the past 30-40 years no longer works. Today, men – especially younger men – are so much busier than they have ever been. Recognize that;

- Many are working long hours to provide for their families and just don't feel like attending anything after they leave their jobs for the day/week.
- Their children are more involved in sports than ever before. Playing 3-4 sports, practices, and games every weekend doesn't leave much time for family, down-time to rest, and especially time to go to another event or activity.

Some are finding it is easier for men to meet in small groups in places like coffee shops, at the gym, in their offices, at restaurants over a meal, maybe in someone's home - places that seem to be outside the box and not what we have considered the norm. There are many resources available for groups like these, most of which do not require much preparation.

In addition, when you keep discipleship group-size to about three or four you will find the bond between men even stronger. This, in turn, strengthens the church. Dr. Gary Yagel in his book [Got Your Back](#), says "If the church has any hope of strengthening its men, it must get men into relationship with other men. It cannot continue to largely ignore the need men have for connection." Remember, even though Jesus picked twelve men to pour his life into, and sent them out to change the world, he pulled three of those men, Peter, James, and John, even closer; allowing them to see his glory, successes, and struggles in a different perspective. He connected with those men in a totally different way than he did the rest of the disciples.

So, don't be afraid to start small with just a few people in the group. In fact, this group could be the catalyst to see more groups to start over time. As these men begin to see the benefit and begin talking and sharing how God is using the group to help them grow, it will inspire other men to be part of a group.

I am currently meeting with a few men, with the hope that these men will one day lead their own small groups when the time is right. Our tendency is to want to see tremendous results now. However, the

reality is, it takes five to ten years to develop an effective ministry to men in the local church. I realize most men don't have the patience. It took me a few years to realize that the reason men were not coming wasn't me or that they were not interested. We just had to understand the problem and find a different approach. So, keep at it. God will reward your efforts.

Together in the challenge and adventure to disciple men - Mike