

Reaching Men: Going Beyond the Normal Saturday Morning Breakfast

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For the past couple of months, I have written about planning for the coming church year and asking the question, "Where are the Men?" This month as you continue planning let's look at some ways that we can reach men that are connected with our churches but are not attending any of the men only events.

When we begin to think holistically about the men of our churches, we find men everywhere; not only are they involved in men only activities, but they are working as Sunday School Teachers, working with children, working with the youth, ushering, singing in the choir, playing in the band, deacons, elders, working in Disaster Relief/Recovery, recreational leagues and the list could go on. We have men, who are on the fringes of the church. Their children are attending our preschools, VBS, AWANAs, Ranger Ministries, Summer Camps, and this list could probably continue. But the question is; "How do we minister to these men?"

We need to think outside the box of our typical ministry to men and begin to understand these men may not be able to have time to work on projects; but, many of them are looking for meaningful relationships with other men who are willing to pour their life into them. Many of them don't even know what they are looking for; but, they know there is something missing. I am reminded of 1 Thessalonian 2:8 where Paul said, "We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us." The phrase to understand and make it a part of your ministry to men is "to share not only the gospel of God but **also our own lives**" (bold for emphasis). Let me give you a few examples of how we can do that.

- A lead Usher who makes cards with a verse on one side and points about the verse on the other side and gives it to those helping on Sunday morning. Spend five minutes talking about the verse and then praying with the men. This could be expanded to men who are members of the choir or praise band, parking cars, teaching, etc. That is ministering to men.
- A Sunday School Teacher who plans events for the men of his group to attend ballgames, racing events, fishing, etc. to develop relationships so he can pour his life into the men and they can see he works through life issues just like them.
- A church who gives a book out to all the men of the church dealing with men life issues. Encourage a time for any man who desires to meet and walk through the book once again helping them see he is not the only one who struggles with life issues.
- A man who reaches out to 2-3 men and invites them to meet with him regularly to walk through a book or read and talk about a book in the Bible.
- Begin a mentoring ministry where seasoned men can put their name on a list for younger men to connect with to help them grow.
- Create events for dads of preschoolers, VBS or other children ministry attendees to attend an event with their child and provide the dads an opportunity to join a group that may help him be the dad and husband God desires for them to be.

But most of all we need to create a welcoming atmosphere for men. They need to feel no pressure or judgements, remember they are people and not projects. We need to understand that everything our church does that touches any man is ministering to men. Everything! There is an old saying in the business world, "Your system is perfectly designed to produce the results you are getting." Therefore, our ministry to men are perfectly designed to produce the type of men we have sitting in the pews of our churches.

Together in the adventure and challenge to disciple men - Mike