

The Ministry of Hanging Out

January 2, 2020

My mentor in men's ministry, Jeff Kisiah, who went home to the Lord this past year, taught me about this ministry many years ago. It is something we all do - 'hanging out'. When a bunch of guys get together and do something they connect with or have a common interest in, we refer to this as 'hanging out;' However, many of us probably have not realized the significance of how men getting together for various activities can be used to energize men into a deeper spiritual relationship with God.

My experience has taught me these times of hanging out create "on ramps" for enlisting men into the battle for men's souls. Oftentimes we have events that really interest the men in our churches but that is all they are – events. They become “on-ramps” that have been closed to a path of discipleship.

Once, I was at an event with over 60 men in attendance. They had fun, ate, and listen to a short message. This was a great “on-ramp” opportunity for men to invite other men who are not connected to the church or sitting on the fringes. However, nothing was provided for these men to take the next step toward a discipling relationship. In contrast, I was recently at an event with about 100 men with the same basic agenda. The difference was that, at the end, they encouraged men to get into a discipling relationship and even had men available to discuss how to do this. These men witnessed the importance of men rubbing shoulders (Proverbs 27:17) encouraging them to get involved in something more than just an event. Too often, we don't use these opportunities, and the “on-ramp” is essentially closed.

I hear Men's Ministry Leaders' (MML) frustration when men "on the fringe" remain disinterested or disconnected. What do I mean by men “on the fringe?” These are men who are connected with the church but are not involved. You know them, every church has these men. These are men who need another man to come alongside and encourage them. The best way to do that is to have times when men can just “hang-out” and get to know each other. Creating opportunities that interest them and attend with other men with a common interest. Which means you need to “Know Your Men.” But that is a subject for a future discussion.

One 'hang-out' example is Drive Time Fellowship. I used to take a group of men to Atlanta once a year for a men's conference and they would tell me the most enjoyable time of the trip was the fellowship during the drive. God has worked uniquely in the lives of men through these times of men just “hanging-out.” I would be glad to send you a list of ideas, just email me at mike@capefarmen.org.

My life verse is 1 Thessalonians 2:8 when Paul writes;

“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.” (emphasis is mine)

We need to be in the habit of sharing our lives with other men. Meeting them where they are at and not where we want them to be. Letting them see we really do care for them and desire to share life with them.

Start practicing “The Ministry of Hanging Out” as you minister to men and encourage your men to start seeing this as an opportunity to reach men. As you do, you will begin to see changes in the lives of men you encounter.

Together in the adventure and challenge to disciple men - Mike