

When the term "men's ministry" is mentioned, some may think of a Saturday or Sunday morning breakfast meeting in which men "meet, eat, burp and go home!" But this has changed! More and more, local church men's leaders are discovering the need to stretch beyond the traditional boundaries of Baptist Men into areas that will attract non-active men to the ministry. One of the keys to this is helping men grow spiritually. Always keep in mind that your ministry to men is all about relationships - men building trusting relationships with each other - and certainly, men's relationship with Christ. Men want to be challenged. Most also want a chance to learn more about their relationship with Christ.

One area where spiritual growth can be enhanced is the monthly men's gathering. Rather than being a time for primarily reporting and planning, Men's Ministry groups are seeing the monthly meeting as a time for inspiration and growth. Men are careful with their schedules these days, and not likely to come to something they feel is not worth their time. Therefore, it is important that a monthly meeting be relevant to a men's need for spiritual growth, involvement, challenge.

Below are suggestions that may enhance the effectiveness of your monthly men's gatherings. Remember, a goal is not only to enhance those men who attend regularly but also to reach men who have dropped out or have never been involved

1. Establish a meeting time that will allow the most men to come, while giving you time to accomplish your ministry goals: Weeknight meetings may work well for some churches. Saturday morning allows time for breakfast, a meaningful, spirit-filled meeting, and the possibility of a ministry or missions event afterward. Sunday mornings may not be the best time for a men's ministry meeting. Time is limited. There may be a "formal" feeling to meeting on Sunday morning. And some men will need to go back home to pick up their family. (But, if Sunday works for you and your guys, go for it!)

2. Find ways to add spiritual dimension to your meetings: This is what most men hunger for. This is also what will help you grow your Men's Ministry. It will require a transformation for many as to what the purpose of the monthly meeting is. There should be a short time for announcements, planning and reporting, but those items are not the focus of the meeting. Focus on those things that will inspire and incite men to spiritual growth. Here's four elements that, if used consistently, can completely transform your monthly meetings into worshipful experiences:

- **Singing:** Believe it or not, men will sing! You will need to find the type of music your men respond to most favorably. Many groups are finding praise songs and choruses (with the use of a media projector) effective in setting a worshipful, meaningful tone. If a man in your church plays the guitar and can lead in the singing of choruses, do your best to enlist him! The use of downloadable music videos can also be very effective. They provide music and words for groups who may not have a music leader.
- **Testimony:** Ask one of your men to share a short (5 minute) testimony. While this could be a testimony on how he became a believer, you might encourage a man to share about something that he has seen God do in his life *recently*. This can be an encouraging time for both the men, and for the one sharing.
- **Teaching:** This can be done with the use of a live speaker or video. It should be geared specifically to issues men face (spiritual growth, how to be a better father, money management, sexual temptation, etc.). Your pastor, visiting pastor, or speaker could be enlisted. A live speaker allows the opportunity for interaction. There are also many good video series that are specifically designed for men. Another option could be use of a men's ministry book or Bible study resource. Discuss a chapter each week.
- **Discussion:** Organize the men into groups of three. Give them a sheet with 2-3 thought-provoking questions related to the teaching they have just heard, and ask them to discuss. This is a very important time, not to be overlooked. This sharing will reinforce the teaching lesson. It also gives a much needed platform for men to discuss the "real" things of life and not just the "safe" things men's conversation usually gravitate toward (sports, work, and the weather!). This is where real growth takes place.
- **Prayer:** Ask for specific prayer requests in the large group setting. Then ask men to pray in their small groups for these requests, as well as others they may share among themselves. Encourage targeted prayer for spiritual healing and awakening, not just physical healing. Sometimes it's helpful to ask each man, within the small group, to share one request for someone else and one thing for himself.