

Why a Course on Ministry to Men?

Men and Society

Rasmussen reports that 83 percent of Americans believe that we are headed in the wrong direction¹. To be blunt, we are in significant moral decline. The following statistics are chilling:²

- About 113 million men age 15 or older live in the U.S. (est. 2007).
- Of that number 66 million make no profession of faith in Christ.
- Only 6 million men (1 in 18) are involved in any kind of spiritual formation or discipleship.
- 72 million children are under 18. One-third of them do not live with their biological fathers.
- Estimates indicate that 66 percent of children born in the U.S. will not live with both biological parents through the age of 18.
- Fatherless children are five times more likely to live in poverty, repeat a grade, or have an emotional problem.
- Forty percent of first marriages end in divorce affecting 1,000,000 children each year.
- Thirty-three percent of all children are born out of wedlock.

The nightly news is filled with stories of ethics issues and violent crime. Add to this the sexual content of the media and entertainment. Beyond that there is the easy access to pornography leading to sexual addictions and bondage. While many in America consider this to be wrong, the trend continues downward.

We are called, as disciples, to go into this world and make disciples; to rescue men. This is the battlefield.

Men in the Church

Are the men in the church motivated and equipped to engage in this battle? Man in the Mirror reports that for every 10 men in the average church today:³

- 9 will have children who leave the church
- 8 will not find their jobs satisfying
- 6 will pay monthly minimum on credit cards
- 5 have a *major* problem with pornography
- 4 will get divorced affecting 1,000,000 children each year
- Only 1 will have a biblical worldview
- All 10 will struggle to balance family and work

¹ Rasmussen Report, November 9, 2011, http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/mood_of_america/right_direction_or_wrong_track.

² Man in the Mirror. No Man Left Behind Essentials: Helping your Church Disciple Every Man, (Orlando, FL: MIM, 2010), 3.

³ *ibid.*

David Murrow, author of *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, reports that on average, men comprise 39 percent of adult Sunday worshippers in American churches today.⁴ "... the congregation that is able to attract larger proportions of men ... is the exceptional congregation – and is more likely to grow."⁵ From another perspective, on any given Sunday, there are 13 million more adult women than men in American churches.⁶

This same gender imbalance is reflected in ministry and ministry leadership in many churches. George Barna found that "Women, more often than not, take the lead role in the spiritual life of the family. Women typically emerge as the primary--or only--spiritual mentor and role model for family members. And that puts a tremendous burden on wives and mothers."⁷

The Battle for the Souls of Men

It has been reported that only ten percent of the churches in America have some type of ministry to men. Of those, only three in ten churches are effective in moving men from the community to the pew and from the pew into an intentional discipling ministry.

Passion.

There always have been and always will be a few men who have a passion for the battle for men's souls. Their numbers are small in comparison to the need. Therefore, we must be intentional in building and equipping our men for the battle.

Pastor involvement has proven to be a critical in the effectiveness of ministry to men. First, the pastor may have to develop a man to lead the effort. If that is the case the pastor may have to lead the ministry until someone is equipped and ready to step up to that responsibility. Second, even if there is a layman with passion for the ministry, he will need to be mentored and coached. Furthermore, ministry to men is broader than a men's group. Ministry to men is all inclusive. That means considering all ministries in the church that involve men. Discipleship leads to service and service leads to discipleship. Moreover, men's activities must be integrated into the vision and mission of the church. Therefore, pastoral oversight is essential. Finally, a pastor demonstrates his support by his presence and participation in men's activities. Pastors must have a passion for the battle for men's souls.

Understanding. It has been suggested that leading men is like herding cats. Patrick Morley has said that ministering to men is rocket science. Discipling men is a challenge. That challenge involves understanding how men think and knowing how to build relationships and trust,

⁴ David Murrow, "Where are all the Men?" <http://churchformen.com/allmen.php>.

⁵ C. Kirk Hadaway, *FACTs on Growth*, Hartford, CT: Faith Communities Today, 2006. 4.

⁶ This statistic comes from Barna's figures on male/female worship attendance, overlaid upon the Census 2000 numbers of adult men and women in the U.S. population.

⁷ Mark Wingfield, "Women Carrying Big Load at Church," *Baptist Standard*, http://www.baptiststandard.com/2000/4_3/pages/women.html, April 3, 2000.

Relationships. Promise Keepers report: “Many men feel isolated today. Studies show that most men past the age of 30 do not have friends. They have colleagues and work buddies, golf partners and perhaps a “couple” friend or two, where the bond is really between the wives. If they say they do have a best friend, often it turns out to be an old friend whom they see or speak to once every few years.”⁸

Societal Influence. Understanding men as dynamic, changing individuals, who live in a rapidly changing environment, is critical to the success of discipling men. The male segment of society cannot be viewed as static and unchanging. The breakdown of the family, the increase in longevity of the older population, the influx of singles to the urban scene, the mobility in the professional and vocational marketplace, the prominence of pornography and sexual images and alternate lifestyles, are all societal indicators that influence how we reach men.

The Masculine Context. Pastoring men at home and overseas involves breaking through the relational barrier. That in turn requires understanding cultural and Biblical masculinity. The better a pastor understands the men they work, live, and worship with the more effectively he will be in impacting their lives.

Equipping. Today there are a number of excellent resources for building an effective ministry to men. In some cases the cost these resources is beyond the means of many Alliance churches. Therefore pastors need to be equipped to guide, train and equip a leadership team.

Pastors are Key. While a lay led ministry to men is desirable, pastor involvement has proven to be essential in encouraging male participation in men’s activities. Therefore, pastors need insight, tools, and understanding to effectively disciple men. They need to understand how men think, behave, live and feel as a basis for connecting with them and launching or encouraging them on their spiritual journey. These are fundamental factors in reaching men not only in the church but the community as well.

Attracting Men to Church and Discipleship. Finally, the way that the churches present opportunities for men in worship, learning, and in relationships with others is diversifying at a rapid pace. Ensuring that these facets are planned and conducted with men in mind is important in drawing and retaining men.

⁸ Promise Keepers Foundations for Effective Men’s Ministry: Instructor’s Manual, (Denver, PK, 1998), 3.

Suggestions for a Course on Ministry to Men

Suggested Course Description: This course will delve into the importance of ministry to men and who needs to be involved in that ministry. It also provides an opportunity to study methods for ministering to men. The course will explore concepts of reaching men in the community, engaging men on the fringe, discipling through small group and mentoring ministries, serving the needs of the congregation and community. The class will be a seminar involving lectures, discussion, input from resource persons and films. Much of class time will be committed to student research and discussion.

Suggested Learning Outcomes As a result of participation in such a course the student should:

1. Be aware of, defend, and justify an intentional ministry to men.
2. Be better acquainted with the relational (fellowship), service, and spiritual dimensions of ministry to and with men.
3. Recognize the variety of ministry opportunities available to and with the male segment of the church and community.
4. Develop and use existing ministry forms such as worship, Bible studies, mentoring, service to the congregation, seminars, workshops, and retreats through which men may become and mature as effective disciples.
5. Understand the significant role men play in establishing healthy churches.
6. Be equipped to formulate a well-balanced ministry to and with men in the church and in ministry beyond the boundaries of the physical plant.
7. Be equipped to develop or enhance ministries within the church that appeal to men.

Suggested Topics to Probe:

1. Foundations of Ministry to Men
 - a. Theological considerations
 - b. Our Culture
 - c. The need for ministry to men
 - d. Connecting with men in the pew and community
 - e. Building spiritual content into the lives of men
 - f. Moving men into ministry and service
2. Needs to Address
 - a. Men in society
 - b. Men in the pew
 - c. Men in ministry
3. Approaching the Task of Ministry to Men
 - a. Establishing a leadership team
 - b. Reaching men in the community
 - c. Reaching men on the fringe
 - d. All inclusive ministry to men
 - e. Building relationships among the men
 - f. Considering logical next steps in discipling men

- g. Small groups and mentoring
 - h. Moving from ministry to men toward ministry by men
4. Challenges in Ministry to Men
 - a. Finding/developing men to lead the ministry
 - b. Encouraging male leaders in the church to think in terms of disciplemaking
 - c. Nonparticipation of men in the church
 - d. Tailoring disciplemaking to the individual
 - e. Ministering cross-generationally and cross-culturally
 - f. Making the church appealing to men
 5. Ministry Outside the Building
 - a. Partnering with other churches in the community
 - b. Using para-church ministries
 - c. Men's conferences, seminars, and workshops
 - d. Men's Retreats
 - e. Serving the community
 - f. Short-term missions (US and overseas)
 8. Tailoring the Ministry to a Local Church
 - a. Pastor's philosophy of ministry
 - b. The spiritual gifts available
 - c. The local culture/environment
 - d. The interests of the men (Affinity)
 - e. Possibility thinking and planning v traditionalism

Suggested Student Assignments:

1. Student-led Discussion. The discussion can be based on topics from a pertinent list. Suggest a 50-minute class session based on material in related books, journals, and other professional publications. Students may use audio and video material in their research and presentation.
2. Focused Study: Suggest a study primarily focused on the development of a potential ministry to men in a local church.
 - a. Conduct a Local Church Workshop: As a team, develop a one-day ministry planning experience for a group of men in a church setting. Plan, conduct and evaluate the workshop. The evaluation should analyze the effectiveness in achieving pre stated objectives. Possible topics include:
 - All inclusive ministry to men
 - Strategy: The logical next steps
 - Values, vision and mission for a ministry to men
 - Planning outreach opportunities
 - Building relationships among men.

- b. Investigate a Community Service Ministry: Investigate a local community service ministry for men. Give a verbal report to the class about the ministry. This report should include a description of the ministry, and a response to such questions as:
- How would this ministry appeal to men?
 - Is this a unique ministry, if so, how?
 - Is this ministry a model of something a typical Alliance church could do?
 - Would an understanding of this community ministry help the local church where you will take your seminar?
3. Review of Periodicals: Read in leadership journals, periodicals and ministry websites during the semester. Prepare a one page review of three different articles dealing with an aspect of ministry to men. The review should be composed of a bibliographic statement, a paragraph summarizing the author's intent, and a paragraph or two on reaction, critique, or evaluation of the article's impact on ministry to men in the church.
4. Outside Enrichment: Expand on class discussions by reading in ancillary books, journals and other professional publications. Audio, video, and public broadcasting specials related to the study will also provide valuable input.
5. Evaluate a Local Church Ministry. Prepare a paper describing the ministry to men in the church you attend. Evaluate the program for balance, and effectiveness, and make recommendations for strengthening the ministry.

Suggested Resources:

Coaching Handbook: Help Desk Resources, (Linwood, NC: C&MA Men's Ministry, 2009)
(Posted on cmamen.org" www.cmamen.org as the Local Church Toolkit)

Patrick Morley, *Pastoring Men: What Works, What doesn't and Why It Matters Now More Than Ever*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009)

Tom Sefik, *Catalyst: Transforming Lives Through Discipleship*, (Colorado Springs: C&MA Men's Ministry, 2009)

Dan Erikson and C&MA Men's Ministry, *The Framework for Men's Ministry*, 2008 (Posted on www.cmamen.org under Local Church Toolkit)

Michael Kimmel, *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2008)

Jeff Swaim and David Delp, *Blueprint: A strategy for Ministering to Men*, (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House:, 2007) (Available from C&MA Men's Ministry)

Patrick Morley, David Delk and Bret Clemmer, *No Man Left Behind: How to build and Sustain a Thriving Disciple-Making Ministry for every Man in Your Church*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2005)

Karl W. Klappmann, *Men's Ministry for the Small Church*, (Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2004)

Brad Lewis, ed., *Men's Ministry in the 21st Century: The Encyclopedia of Practical Ideas*, (Loveland Colorado: Group, 2004)

Phil Downer, ed., *Effective Men's Ministry: The Indispensible Toolkit for Your Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001)

Steve Sonderman, *How to Build a Life Changing Men's Ministry: Bringing the Fire Home to your Church*, (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1996)

David Murrow

Why Men Hate Going to Church, revised and updated, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011)

The Map: The Way of all Great Men, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010)

Gary McIntosh, *One Church, Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching all Ages in Your Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002)

Leon J. Podles, *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity*, (Dallas: Spence Publishing, 1999)

Geoff Gorsuch, *Brothers: Calling Men to Vital Relationships*, (Colorado Springs: Nav Press, 1994)

Suggested Resource Persons

Len Ruffner, National Director, C&MA Men's Ministry

David Brown, Director, Washington Area Coalition of Men's Ministry

Chris Van Brocklin, National Director Men's Ministry, Evangelical Free Church

Brian Doyle, Director, National Men's Conferences (Iron Sharpens Iron)

Man in the Mirror

Dr. Patrick Morley, CEO

David Delk, President

Bret Clemmer, Vice President of Leadership Development

Dr. Dan Erickson, Director, People Matter Ministries

Chuck Brewster, National Director, Champions of Honor

Phil Downer, Director, Discipleship Network of America

Steve Sonderman, Director, Top Gun Ministries

Larry Malone, National Director, United Methodist Men