

Avoid These 2 Common Traps in Men's Ministry

Before you can get off the roller coaster, you have to know how you got on in the first place. If a roller-coaster men's ministry is the problem, what's the cause? In our experience, there are two different traps that men's ministries fall into.

Trap No. 1: The Personality-Driven Men's Ministry

Some churches have men's ministries that go extremely well for a couple of years and then run out of steam. They have several great events each year, ongoing small groups for men, well-attended mission trip ... you get the picture.

But then, over the course of several months, it just all seems to die out. The next men's retreat comes around, and it's not very well organized. Only half as many guys show up as last year. Small groups are disappearing, and the guy in charge of them seems to have lost interest. Generally, activities just sort of fade away.

This is the classic symptom of a personality-driven men's ministry. In this scenario, a dynamic, spiritually mature leader gathers a group of men around him and organizes the men's ministry. He has the respect of his pastor and the leadership of the church, and they give him the resources he needs to make things happen. His organizational skills help ensure high quality events that guys appreciate.

Unfortunately, one day, he gets a promotion that requires additional travel. And his right-hand man has to reduce his involvement when his mother faces a health crisis and has to move in with him. They haven't recruited any additional leaders, so there's no one else ready or willing to step up. It's like someone taking their foot off the gas as the car speeds down the road. It keeps going for a while on sheer

momentum. But eventually, it will coast to a stop.

Trap No. 2: The Event-Driven Men's Ministry

Perhaps your men's ministry goes through a series of ups and downs several times throughout each year: You spend a couple of months hyping the Big Men's Rally and Barbecue right after Labor Day. The men of your church get pumped up. They sign up in the lobby for the event several weeks in advance. Everyone is talking about last year when they roasted a whole pig on a spit—gross and fascinating at the same time.

The event comes, and you have a great turnout. Everyone is excited about getting your new church year started right for the men. And then ...

Well, I guess we better start getting ready for the Super Bowl Party in February. Then ... the Spring Men's Weekend. Then ... the Big Men's Rally again.

For this church, men's ministry is a series of "blips." Each year, there are three or four big events that guys get excited about. But in between, the church is still struggling to get men to work in the nursery, the Sunday school classes have the same (old) people in them, and the monthly pancake breakfast is just about the only other men's activity available.

This is an event-driven men's ministry. Of course, events for men are important. We need lots of entry points for men to become involved in the life of the church and to get exposed to the gospel. But if the event is all there is, eventually, men will stop coming.

Overcoming the Roller Coaster

Would you turn on the air conditioning in your house in the middle of the summer and then leave the doors and windows open? Of course not. In the same way, it takes a tremendous amount of work and energy to overcome inertia in men by

creating value and momentum. Doesn't it make sense to have a concrete plan to capture that momentum and keep men moving forward in their relationship with God?

Big Idea: *To escape the traps of men's ministry, have a strategy in place to capture the energy your events create and channel it into the right next step for every man.*

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