

Why the Church Needs to Discard the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Policy

Pornography is one of the fastest-growing problems in the church. As I have traveled the world speaking at different conferences about sexual integrity, I have found that more than 50 percent of the men attending will admit to being addicted to pornography.

These men don't admit to struggling—they admit to being completely addicted to pornography.

What about the church staff? Many church staff members were also raised sexually by *Playboy*, the internet and our sexually infused culture. The church needs to accept that being involved in ministry doesn't make anyone immune to the porn problem.

This problem is largely a male issue, but there is more research supporting the fact that there are Christian women who are also engaging in pornography and inappropriate relationships on social networks.

Rarely does a month go by that a pastor or Christian leader isn't sitting in my office with a porn or other moral failure that could have been helped by having some of these strategies in place. I still remember the day a young woman came up to me and said she didn't feel as if she could trust church leadership anymore because of her pastor's sexual transgressions. She said, "How can I know that no other church leaders are struggling with this same exact issue?"

She was right. The church needs to make a plan to maintain sexual integrity in the church. There are several proactive methods the church can commit to or request from its team to

minimize the threat of porn or other sexual issues that can ultimately damage the ministry. One of the biggest ways to do so is by eliminating the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy in the church.

We hear so much in the media about the military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. Unfortunately, many churches also adhere to the same policy. Oftentimes churches even refuse to ask the important questions. We don’t ask our singles, married men or women and especially our staff questions about their sexual integrity, purity or pornography standpoints or problems. The church needs to take a stand against this issue together. Ministries should feel obligated to ask staff if they are viewing porn. When you ask, you are giving the opportunity for honesty. When you don’t ask, this secret can grow into an affair or lawsuit for the church. So don’t be afraid to ask.

I have had men and women in my office whose small pornography habit turned into an addiction, which turned into an affair. If this pornography habit had been nipped in the bud with an accountability partner and a support group in the church, these people would not have ended up in my office on the brink of divorce.

If the church just took the initiative to have an “ask and tell” policy, who knows? Maybe we would start seeing the church’s divorce rate go down. Infidelity might start to decrease. Marriage satisfaction would go up, and pornography would be extinguished from the church. {eoa}

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