

Men in Church by Kevin Kosberg

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I am a guy, and I am about to confess to you one of my darkest secrets. If I weren't a pastor, I am not sure that I would go to church very often. There is a reality in 21st century America that our church is dealing with: most men don't like church.

In his recent book, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, David Murrow gives some reasons for his somewhat shocking title.

1. Men don't like to sing in public.

Think about how much of our worship involves singing. Look around at your next worship service and notice how many men are participating but not singing.

2. Men don't really like to talk about their feelings or to talk about relationships.

Think about how your church talks about following Jesus. Most of us use the picture of a relationship with Jesus. We tell men that they grow in that relationship by sitting around and talking about how the Bible impacts their life.

3. Most men love a challenge, a chance to risk and to put their faith into action.

Consider having more opportunities for the men in your church to grow through service. I had a real learning experience when twelve men from our congregation spent a week in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina. We did not spend a ton of time in the Bible each day, but instead put faith into action, shoulder to shoulder, as we "mucked out" houses, shingled roofs and ate and played together. I bet those twelve men would say they grew more in their faith that week than at any other time in their lives.

4. Men respect and expect excellence and quality.

But excellence and quality are probably not the first two words that pop into the average man's mind when he thinks about church. Think seriously about how your church can strive for excellence and quality in all the areas of your ministry; from the music to the messages; from the way the church is decorated to the activities you offer men. God is worthy of our best efforts and so are the men (and women) who have yet to come to know His grace in Jesus.

After reading *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, our staff and men's ministry leaders began to think about the messages that we are sending to men. Here are some changes we are trying to make.

1. We changed our men's ministry from monthly dinner meetings with a Bible study to what we call Men's Ministry Adventures. These adventures are quick hitting, fun, risky get-aways for men. A group hiked down to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and camped there for a few days. We took a group of men white water rafting in the mountains, and we have golf weekends. We are also looking at a home remodeling ministry in some of the poorer parts of Phoenix. The goal is to get guys side by side, living out their faith.
2. We have also tried hard to become more sensitive about how we talk about following Jesus. We try to use that exact phrase – "to follow Jesus" -- as much as possible. It implies motion and movement, things that appeal to men. In messages, we talk about what it looks like to follow Jesus in marriage, at work, while using our money, and so on. We believe this picture is more helpful to men. After all, Jesus called His disciples to follow Him.

I encourage you to look closely at how your church connects with men and encourage you to read David Murrow's *Why Men Hate Going to Church*.

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Reflection Questions:

1. In your experience, do you think men don't like church?
2. How would you rate your congregation on how well you meet the needs of men?
3. If you wanted to make some changes in how you work with the men of your community and congregation, who would you involve in that process? List 5 or so people who could help you evaluate and plan.