



# How to ...

## Run a men's breakfast

Men's breakfasts have been staple fare of Church's Men's programmes for many years, and run well can be extremely effective in evangelism and encouraging discipleship. Here are a few thoughts as to how they might be used effectively

### **Before the practicalities and 'how to's' we need to ask the question 'why?'**

Surely in 21<sup>st</sup> Century society, the church is better off concentrating on events that are inclusive with men and women equally welcome. Actually it's recognised that men and women are looking for different things from church, and that there's massive benefit in providing gender specific activities to run alongside the larger all-inclusive gatherings.

*'Men want to know that the church has something relevant for them. They want to feel part of the church, and an open Men's Group is a non-threatening way to connect them easily to the church and allow both new and existing men to build friendships with others.'*

Promisekeepers.org.nz

### **There's a second why question here**

Why are you looking to run the event? What are you looking to achieve and who is it aimed at?

Is it primarily about evangelism and reaching men who don't yet know Christ; is it about discipleship and encouraging men in your church to be the best they can be for God in their everyday lives, or is it a combination of the two? Are you aiming at a particular age profile?

Your answer to these questions will determine the frequency of your meetings, the type of speaker you look for, the ways in which you promote the event, and in all likelihood the venue. Take time to pray into these things.

### **Whatever you decide, there are some important considerations.**

**Venue:** This will depend on your target audience, their mobility and financial freedoms.

There's no point organising an event at a golf club 5 miles away if few of the men drive or would consider paying golf club prices. Equally businessmen in middle class suburbia might shudder at the prospect of a mix and match breakfast in the local scout hut. Ask around, get a few men together to throw around ideas and consider suitable venues. A venue needs a distinct room or area where there will be no other distractions, a welcoming environment where men will feel able to relax and a standard of catering appropriate to your group.

To keep the cost down there may be volunteers in your church who would be willing to cook for your event.

It might also be worth considering linking with other churches and running the event jointly to ensure a wider audience and strengthened relationships between men in a local area.

**Speakers:** If men are giving up their Saturday morning lie in, or sacrificing time with friends and family, any event you run needs to be worth participating in. If you're going to utilise a speaker they need to be engaging, thought provoking and relevant. Men in your congregation may well have connections with potential Christian speakers from the world of business, politics or sport

with a story to tell or a message to share. Don't be afraid to ask high profile figures, many are very open to such invitations.

**Format and frequency:** Variety is the spice of life. If breakfasts are to be part of an ongoing men's programme, mix things up. Some speakers are great at talking for 30 minutes or more and have the ability to hold people's attention with their anecdotes, wisdom and humour. Others are more suited to an interview style format. Liaise with them in advance to get a sense of what might work best. Depending on the group an open forum/debate approach might be appropriate if chaired skilfully. Will you run them monthly, quarterly, annually? Much will depend on their purpose and where they fit within your church's mission strategy.

## Organisation and Promotion

There's no point in having a great venue, an engaging speaker and great food, if no one turns up, so here are a few simple tips for promoting your event:

- 1) Advertise early – through the church notice sheet, by producing a flier, on social media and in the local press. Think carefully about how to reach your target audience.
- 2) Ensure buy-in from as many men as possible – if men in the church catch the vision they're far more likely to invite friends from both within and outside the church. Enthuse them and set the breakfasts in the wider context of the church's vision.
- 3) To make booking easy use sign up lists at the back of church and consider setting up a dedicated email address for people to respond to, eg [men@nameofchurch.com](mailto:men@nameofchurch.com). Be clear as to the cost, venue, timings etc. In any publicity ask yourself whether it would give you enough information if you had no prior knowledge of the event. If you need to know definite numbers for catering purposes, make that clear.
- 4) Liaise with the Venue in a timely fashion – clarify with them when final numbers are needed and the timetable for your event. Check exactly what is included in the price quoted and the payment terms.

**Follow up** – This can easily be neglected meaning that the benefits of a men's ministry are compromised. If you're clear as to your expected outcomes, you'll be able to plan accordingly. Where can men take what they have heard – follow up conversations, encouragement into accountability groups, etc. Make the options clear at the end of the breakfast, and let people know about any future events planned. Who knows what God might do!

## And finally.....

**Take time for review** – it's always good to reflect on whether such events are meeting their original aims. What fruit are you seeing in terms of changed lives and strengthening of relationships with men both inside and outside the church community? Nothing is forever and a format that's worked well for several years may need a complete refresh to connect with men in a fast changing culture.

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