



A modern roadmap to connection through Christ

# Men's Ministry Guide



# Introduction

*Beyond News, Sports, And The Weather*

**W**elcome to the LMM Men's Ministry Guide.

Thank you for taking the first step to bringing men closer to Christ, their families, their friends, their communities, and each other.

Our mission is simple: By God's grace, to intentionally disciple men by modeling the character of Jesus and lead a transformative ministry of loving and serving our neighbors.

The detailed yet simple blueprint below does not reinvent the wheel. On the contrary, successful and transformative men's ministry moves on the ever-turning wheel of faith, trust, and love that Jesus Himself introduced to the original Twelve, and to the world. The wheel's spokes are built of a leadership model that, if followed with intention and deep faith, is stronger than iron: Identify, Invite, and Invest. By following this guide, those spokes gain even greater strength through effective and consistent methods of gathering men in the glory of God, for the greater good.

This ministry is about men encountering Jesus Christ—and our broader church community supporting local congregations in making that happen.



## **LMM's Vision**

*For every man become a bold, daring follower of  
Jesus Christ*

## **Getting Started With Men's Ministry**

This isn't just about launching a men's group—it's about building a life-changing ministry that helps men grow in faith, build relationships, and serve with purpose.

Whether you are in a large church or a small congregation partnering with others, these steps will help you lay a strong foundation.

# Twelve Keys To A Healthy Men's Ministry

## 1. Prayer

- Christ-centered worship is a must
- A strong network of prayer partners
- A clear and intentional prayer strategy

## 2. Biblical Foundation

- Helps men apply God's Word in everyday life
- Follows the example of Jesus' ministry – the “red print”
- Draws from the teachings and practices of Paul and other biblical leaders

## 3. Leadership

- Actively supported by the church pastor and lay leadership
- Led by a committed core team
- Encourages leadership development and participation
- Models servant leadership
- Meets regularly for prayer, planning, and team building

## 4. Strategic Planning

- Driven by a clear, mission-focused purpose statement
- Guided by strategy, not tradition
- Plans with men's busy lives and family/work commitments in mind
- Sets and communicates clear, measurable goals
- Discern what the need of the community is or what might be missing

## **5. Effective Management**

- Regularly gathers feedback from men, the church, and the community
- Operates smoothly without micromanagement or “mission creep” — keep it simple and powerful
- Grows at a pace that’s sustainable for all men involved, now and in the future

## **6. Male-Centered Context**

- Focused exclusively on ministering to all men
- Creates a brave, safe, and welcoming space
- Builds trust and fosters authentic relationships

## **7. Relationship-Driven**

- Prioritizes relationships over programs
- Encourages small group involvement/participation
- Balances large events with deeper connection opportunities
- Reinforces trust that leads to accountability

## **8. Outreach**

- Reaches out to unchurched men with open and non-threatening entry points
- Engages in community service and mission projects

## **9. Inclusion**

- Reflects the ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity of the community
- Welcomes all who identify as men
- Offers tailored opportunities for men at different spiritual stages
- Considers age, life stage, interests, and needs in planning

## **10. Variety**

- Provides flexible and diverse ministry options
- Offers multiple ways for men to get involved based on their interests and availability
- Welcomes input on new methods and messaging to reflect a group's evolving spiritual, cultural, and practical needs

## **11. Training & Equipping**

- Hosts focused training and equipping events
- Develops men in their walk with Christ, life skills, and ministry leadership

## **12. Discipleship**

- Offers intentional and pathways for mentoring and spiritual growth
- Helps men live out biblical truth in practical ways

# Foundation Blocks for a Strong Men's Ministry

## 1. It Starts with You

If you're reading this, you likely care deeply about your own spiritual growth—and the spiritual lives of other men in your church and community. You may not see yourself as a leader, but your desire to see God move in men's lives is the first and most important step. You'll need time, prayer, and support—but you're not alone.

## 2. Secure Your Pastor's Support

Your local pastor's (including deacon's or community clergy person's) backing is essential. Have a conversation about:

- Leadership Team: Identify 2–4 men who could help lead.  
Look for:
  - A visionary – someone who sees the big picture.
  - A stakeholder – a respected leader in the church.
  - An activator – someone who gets others involved.
- Pastoral Involvement – Clarify what support you can expect:
  - Attendance at events?
  - Announcements in services or bulletins?
  - Personal invitations to men?
  - Budget support?
  - Regular check-ins?
- Ministry Gaps: Ask where men are underrepresented in church life and how your ministry can help fill those gaps.

### 3. Form Your Leadership Team

Start meeting regularly. Your leadership team is your first small group—model the kind of relationships and spiritual growth you want to see in the wider ministry. Focus on:

- Prayer and Bible study
- Building trust and accountability
- Planning and vision casting

### 4. Develop a Ministry Strategy

- We'll explore this in more detail later, but begin thinking about:
- Your mission and vision
- The needs of men in your church and community
- A timeline for launching your first major event

## Leadership Team Commitments

- Make it a priority: Building a men's ministry takes time and energy. Each team member should be fully committed.
- Attend events: Consider attending regional or national men's ministry events for inspiration and training. (Contact Lutheran Men in Mission/ELCA at 800-638-3522 or visit [lutheranmeninmission.org](http://lutheranmeninmission.org) for upcoming events.)
- Meet regularly: Aim for 90-120-minute meetings that include:
  - Prayer and Bible study
  - Personal support
  - Planning and follow-up
- Suggested resources:
  - *Master Builders Bible for Men*
  - "Accountability: Beyond Football and the Weather"
  - "For Men Only: Issues Men Face"
  - *Lectionary readings (pg. 1737 in the Master Builders Bible)*

## **Plan a Special Event**

Set a date 6–12 months out for a retreat or major event. This gives your team a clear goal and builds momentum. All your early activities should lead toward this event.

## **Build Relationships First**

In the early months, focus on connecting with men in your church and community. Listen to their stories, concerns, and needs.

### **Start by asking:**

Where are men already involved?

- Sports teams?
- Property or maintenance teams?
- Men’s breakfasts?
- Acknowledge and affirm their contributions.

Ask how you can support them—without adding more to their plate.

### **Then ask your pastor/staff:**

Where is a stronger male presence needed?

- Sunday school?
- Youth ministry?
- Choir?
- Leadership roles?

### **Ask this key question:**

“When you think about the men in your life, what are the top 2–3 concerns they’re facing right now?”

Discuss this as a team, and then take it to the men in your church—especially those on the margins or outside the church entirely.

Ask: “What are the biggest challenges in your life right now?”

**Don’t jump to solutions. Instead, ask:**

“How could you see us—this men’s ministry—helping you address those concerns?”

Listen well. Take notes. Be ready to act. Their answers will shape your ministry’s direction.

**Use a Survey to Build Relationships, Not Just Gather Data**

This isn’t about handing out a form and hoping for responses—it’s about starting conversations that lead to meaningful ministry. The survey is a tool for connection, best used in one-on-one or small group settings.

**How to Use the Survey Effectively**

- Get your pastor’s permission before distributing anything
- Target men who aren’t already deeply involved in church life
- Distribute the survey before or after worship, and let men know:
  - You’re not asking for a commitment
  - You’re genuinely interested in their thoughts
  - Someone will collect the survey before they leave
- Follow up: Ask if they’d be open to a short, informal coffee chat to talk more about their responses
- Use the insights to shape your first event and the direction of your ministry

# Sample Men's Ministry Conversation Survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Age Range:  18–24  25–39  40–49  50–64  65+

Marital Status:  Single  Married  Divorced

Children: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What matters most to you right now? (Choose up to 2)

- Family relationships
- Work or career
- Identity as a man
- Balancing life/work/family
- Health
- Retirement
- Reaching other men
- Spiritual growth
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. When are you most available to connect with other men?

- Early morning
- Lunch
- Evenings
- Weekends

3. How much time would you be open to investing in something meaningful?

- One morning or afternoon
- One weekend
- 4–6 weeks
- 3 months
- 6 months
- Ongoing

4. What's your biggest need or question in these areas?

Spiritual: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotional: \_\_\_\_\_

Family/Relationships: \_\_\_\_\_

Work/Vocation: \_\_\_\_\_

Leisure/Recreation: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. How could a men's ministry help you with these?

\_\_\_\_\_

# Clarifying Your Purpose

## Start with Scripture

Use verses like these to inspire your mission:

- *“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” — Proverbs 27:17*
- *“Go and make disciples...” — Matthew 28:18–20*
- *“Carry each other’s burdens...” — Galatians 6:1–2*
- *“Prepare God’s people for works of service...” — Ephesians 4:11–14*
- *“You will be my witnesses...” — Acts 1:8*

## Ask your team:

- What words or themes stand out from these verses?
- What issues have we heard from men in our conversations?
- What do we believe God is calling us to do for the men in our church and community?

Use these insights to craft a mission statement for your men’s ministry. This will guide your decisions and keep your focus on people, not just programs.

*“Are our events serving men—  
or are men just serving our events?”*

# Planning Your First Event

## When planning your first retreat or gathering:

- Let your mission guide the content
- Address the real issues men are facing
- Consider using resources like the Master Builders Bible for Men
- Use small groups (4-6 men) for deeper discussion
- Keep it relational, not just informational

## Retreat Scheduling: Creating Space for Connection

When planning a men’s retreat, it’s easy to over-schedule. But the goal isn’t to cram in content—it’s to create an experience where men can connect with God and each other.

## Keep These Priorities in Mind:

- Build in time for rest, reflection, and recreation
- Focus on relationships, not just information
- Let the setting work for you—use the natural environment to encourage peace and connection

## Recommended Formats:

- Full Weekend Retreat: Friday evening to Sunday noon
  - Ideal for deeper connection and trust-building
- 24-Hour Retreat: Friday evening to Saturday evening
  - Easier first-time commitment, still impactful

A retreat isn’t the finish line—it’s a launchpad for your men’s ministry or the next step in its growth.

# Leadership for the Retreat

You've spent time gathering insights from men—now it's time to equip leaders to guide the experience.

## Leadership Tips

- Aim for 1 leader per 5–6 participants
- Train leaders in advance to facilitate small groups and activities
- Before the retreat ends, introduce new small group leaders and the topics they'll be covering
- Encourage men to join a group before they leave the retreat

## Post-Retreat Momentum

The retreat should lead to ongoing connection. Encourage men to join:

- Small group Bible studies
- Service projects
- Social or interest-based activities

These can be easier entry points for men who are new to church or hesitant about traditional groups.

## Large Group Events

*(2–3 per year)*

These events celebrate what’s happening in your ministry, build community, and invite new men in.

### **Ideas include:**

- Guest speaker dinners (athletes, business leaders, etc.)
- Seminars on men’s issues (fatherhood/family, work/finances, time management. Life stage challenges)
- BBQs or cookouts
- Father-child events (campouts, bike rides)
- Couple’s dinners with a speaker
- Super Bowl or World Cup watch parties

Always be ready to introduce new leaders and groups at these events.

# Event Planning Checklist

Use this sample checklist to plan your retreat or large event.  
Customize it to fit your needs.

Event Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8 Months Before

- Set date and times
- Choose location\*
- Define theme
- Draft budget
- Secure speaker(s)\*
- Book musician(s)

*\*Some venues/speakers may require 12 months' notice.*

## 6 Months Before

- Set registration fee

- Design brochure/registration form
- Start promoting in newsletters
- Ask ministry leaders to help spread the word

#### **4 Months Before**

- Finalize agenda (include free time!)

#### **3 Months Before**

- Appoint registration chair/team
- Order name badges

#### **2 Months Before**

- Finalize worship plans
- Confirm worship leaders
- Arrange banners/visuals
- Secure copyright permissions
- Reserve A/V equipment
- Promote in bulletins/newsletters
- Write detailed agenda
- Create evaluation form
- Begin personal invitations to all men

## **1 Month Before**

- Assign lodging
- Plan room setup and equipment
- Send room list to venue
- Finalize name badges
- Confirm worship space setup (altar, communion, etc.)
- Coordinate hospitality team

# Service Projects for Men's Ministry

Service projects are a powerful way to engage men in meaningful, hands-on ministry. These opportunities allow men to use their skills, build relationships, and serve the community.

## Church-Based Projects

- Church Property Team: Maintain and repair church facilities
- Handyman Ministry: Help congregation or community members with basic home repairs. (Check insurance coverage first)
- Car Ministry: Restore donated vehicles and gift them to those in need (e.g., single parents, students). Offer monthly oil changes and inspections for those who can't afford them
- Garden Ministry: Teach and assist others in growing food on church or community land
- Food Distribution: Start or support a local food pantry.

## Community & Global Projects

- Habitat for Humanity: Join local builds
- Mission Builders: Help construct church buildings
- International Missions: Support or participate in global mission trips
- Meals on Wheels: Volunteer to deliver meals to those in need

## **Social & Interest-Based Groups**

These groups help men connect through shared interests and hobbies:

- **Sports Teams:** Softball, basketball, bowling, or exercise groups. Host post-game meals to build community
- **Outdoor Adventures:** Fishing trips, hiking, camping retreats
- **Special Events:** Golf tournaments, BBQs, or run/walk fundraisers
- **Hobby Groups:** Woodworking, gourmet cooking, or other creative outlets

# Building a Life-Changing Men’s Ministry:

## A Timeline

Timeline	Who	What	Resources
Day 1–6 months	Team Leaders	Planning & Prayer	Master Builders Bible for Men
Months 1–6	Team Leaders	Bible Study & Prayer	Master Builders Bible for Men
Months 2–4	Team Leaders	Interviewing & Surveying	Men’s Ministry Survey
Months 2–4	Team Leaders	Assess men’s involvement & recruit pastoral support	—
Months 1–6	Retreat Team	Retreat/Event Planning	Event Checklist
Months 3–6	Team Leaders	Promote event	Brochures, newsletters, calls

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Months 3–6	Team Leaders	Recruit post-event small group leaders	—
Months 6–8	Team/Retreat Leaders	Host retreat or event	Event Checklist
Post-event	Small Group Leaders	Launch small groups	Master Builders Bible for Men

# Effective Small Group Ministry for Men

## Why Small Groups Matter

Small groups are where men grow spiritually, build trust, and find support. In a culture of isolation, these groups offer community, accountability, and purpose.

## What Is a Small Group?

A small group is a regular, intentional gathering of 4–7 men committed to growing as disciples of Jesus.

## Why They Work

- Rooted in Scripture
- Foster real relationships
- Provide support and prayer
- Encourage accountability
- Offer service and outreach opportunities

## Types of Small Groups

1. Support & Recovery: Parenting, grief, divorce, aging
2. Discipleship: Prayer, Bible study, Christian basics, justice
3. Ministry-Focused: Homeless outreach, prison ministry, Sunday school, choir

## Core Elements of Every Group

1. Bible Study
2. Prayer
3. Service
4. Mutual Support

*The balance of these elements depends on your group's purpose.*

# How To Start A Small Group

Make the first session invitational—no pressure to continue

- Personally invite each man
- Limit to 6–7 men or break into smaller groups during sessions
- Meet in a comfortable, relaxed setting
- No homework—keep it accessible
- Let men discover Scripture together
- Leaders should model vulnerability and openness

## Structure Every Gathering Around:

- Cup – Life sharing and caring
- Book – Bible learning and application
- Heart – Conversational prayer

## Ten Benefits of Men’s Small Groups

1. Life Transformation – Real change happens in community
2. Biblical Application – Learn how to live out Scripture daily.
3. Faith Sharing – Tell and hear stories that inspire
4. Personal Care – One-on-one support in real-life struggles
5. Encouragement & Growth – Learn and grow together
6. Service Opportunities – Put faith into action
7. Friendship Evangelism – Invite others into authentic relationships.
8. Welcoming Newcomers – Help new men feel connected
9. Spiritual Accountability – Grow with honesty and support
10. Leadership Development – Raise up future leaders

## Sample Small Group Schedule

Using the Master Builders Bible for Men (60-90 minutes)

1. Cup (Life Sharing) – 10 min
2. Book (Bible Study) – 40 min
3. Heart (Prayer & Reflection) – 30 min
4. Prayer Requests & Group Prayer – 10 min

## Other Small Group Formats

1. Opening & Icebreaker – 5-10 min
2. Opening Prayer – 2-5 min
3. Biblical Reflection – 10-15 min
4. Group Focus – 30-35 min
5. Support, Discipleship, or Ministry
6. Conversational Prayer – 5-10 min
7. Closing (Lord’s Prayer, Song) – 3-5 min

## Tips for Leading Small Groups

- Start with an icebreaker to build comfort
- Break large groups into smaller circles of 3-4
- Encourage “I” statements for personal sharing
- Be a model of honesty and affirmation
- Let everyone who wants to speak, speak
- Don’t be the expert—be a learner and guide

## Group Covenant (Sample)

*A covenant helps set expectations and build trust*

1. Purpose: Our group exists to...
2. Study Focus: We will study...
3. Materials: We’ll use...

4. Leadership: Led by... or shared by...
5. Frequency: Every \_\_\_ week(s) for \_\_\_ weeks
6. Day/Time/Place: On \_\_\_ from \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_
7. Meeting Flow: Our typical meeting will include...
8. Continuation: At the end, we'll decide together whether to continue.

## Group Ground Rules

- What's shared in the group stays in the group.
- Speak for yourself—use “I” statements.
- Listen without giving advice unless asked.
- Respect all opinions.
- Pray for one another.
- Commit to regular attendance.

## Prayer in Small Groups

Prayer Methods:

- Read prayers
- Silent prayer
- Popcorn or sentence prayers
- Intercessory prayer
- Conversational or spontaneous prayer
- Prayer journals
- Circle prayer
- Facilitator-led prayer

## Tips

- Create a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere
- Start and end on time
- Focus on relationships
- Be consistent, but not rigid
- Include music if appropriate
- Embrace silence
- Keep it real—share life and faith stories

## Small Group Roles

- **Members:** Committed to the group's purpose
- **Facilitator:** Guides discussion, ensures participation, keeps time
- **Host:** Provides hospitality and a welcoming space
- **Empty Chair:** A symbol of Christ's presence and a reminder to invite others

## Recommended Resources

- *The Big Book on Small Groups* – Jeffrey Arnold
- *New Directions for Small Group Ministry* – Paul Borthwick
- *Community Through Small Groups* – Thom Corrigan
- *The Willow Creek Guide to Leading Life-Changing Small Groups* – Bill Donahue
- *Prepare Your Church for the Future* – Carl George
- *Starting Small Groups and Keeping Them Going* – Johnson, Mayer & Vogel
- *Good Things Come in Small Groups* – Glenn W. McDonald
- *Small Groups Can Happen in Mainline Congregations* – Richard C. Meyer
- *Small Group Ministry? For Healthy Congregations Only* – Nancy Vogel
- *Church Innovations Small Group Ministry Material* – Church Innovations Institute
- Serendipity House – [www.serendipityhouse.com](http://www.serendipityhouse.com)

## **Postscript: Not Just an Average Joe**

Joe was a good guy. He showed up at church a few times a year—Easter, Mother’s Day, Christmas—mostly to support his wife and kids. He didn’t dislike church, but it never felt like it had much to do with his everyday life. The sermons didn’t seem to speak to the stress, doubts, and pressure he carried Monday through Saturday.

He often felt like he was falling short—as a husband, a father, and a man. Work was draining. He’d been in middle management for a decade, and whatever joy he once had in the job had long since faded. He was paid for 40 hours but worked 50 or more. The messages he got at work told him he wasn’t enough. And deep down, he believed them.

Joe missed the kind of friendships he had as a kid—friends who knew the real him. Now, most of his relationships were surface-level, tied to work. He once heard someone ask, “If you died today, who would carry your casket?” Joe couldn’t name six men.

His family’s Christmas letters were packed with activities, but he still felt something was missing. A quiet ache. A sense that life was supposed to be more.

He loved sports, so he joined the church softball team. He liked playing first base and grabbing pizza with the guys afterward. It was the only time church felt somewhat familiar.

Then one day, he saw a flyer for a men’s retreat in a newsletter addressed to his wife. He figured it wasn’t for him—it was for the “church guys.” But after the last softball game of the season, a few teammates invited him to go. Saying yes was easier than saying no.

As the retreat approached, Joe second-guessed his decision. He thought about backing out. But he'd already said yes—and the guys were picking him up.

What he found surprised him.

The speaker and music were fine, but it was the conversations with other men that stuck with him. These guys weren't perfect. They had doubts, struggles, and questions—just like Joe. But they were honest about it. They were walking with Christ, and they were doing it together.

Joe saw something in them that he wanted for himself.

Before the retreat ended, he joined a small group Bible study focused on work and purpose. That was six months ago.

Today, Joe's wife and kids are seeing a new man. He's still not perfect. He still has questions. But he's learning to accept himself because he knows God accepts him first. He's got six brothers who walk with him, pray with him, and challenge him to grow.

Joe is no longer just an “average guy.” He's a man living in God's grace—freed from the pain of no one knowing.

