

Topical Issues

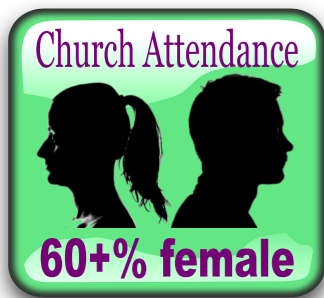
2. Men & Church

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If the typical church service were a TV show, it would be on the Oprah or Hallmark networks, certainly not on the Adventure stations.

Let's be clear from the start, we are examining

the tough issue of reaching more men with the great news of salvation and getting them attending fellowship on a regular basis. And keeping the guys we have already in our church before they leave out the back door. This is NOT just men whinging and whining about women taking over the church. It is calculated that



male church attendance is down to 40% or less, and of those that do attend, some of those attend under sufferance and only in obedience to their God - they would rather not be there. This is not to say that the faith & commitment to God of those men attending or not attending is not strong.

The 'Church' is great for women - not so much for men. Most of the ministries in church revolve around traditionally feminine roles in caring, children, ladies' programs and music ministry. It's all about being 'intimate' with God and others, sharing personal stuff, praying in groups, and a lot of talking and singing. It's the perfect institution for women to use their gifts, so **women naturally excel at church, and most men don't.** There are certainly men out there who are verbal, studious, sensitive, and musical, but their numbers tend to be smaller. And, for the most part, those are the guys we tend to find in church, the artistic men and those good with words. But where does that leave the others, the more macho type men?

Where are the husbands, fathers and young men?

Where are the 'manly men' - construction workers, sports players, truck drivers, business executives? Tough earthy guys, alpha males, risk takers, visionaries? Men who see something wrong and fix it. Men who are willing to fight in the Lord's Army. Men of quick decision and action, not of long words and drawn-out prayers. These men will not sit in church for an hour or more, week after week doing nothing but warming up a pew. **It drives them nuts!** These men want to serve God with a hammer, not an apron.



The manly no-nonsense sort of guy sees the hypocrisy of people being told to be bold in following Jesus, yet seeing that they are unwilling to change the way they do things, or will not trust God for expansion plans even when it is glaringly obvious that it is

needed. They see the church employ a teacher to do all the sermons even though there are a number who could also be sharing. These men are active men, if you don't involve them in an active way in your church, they stop coming or won't come. **Men need to work in ministry some way or they stay home.**

The church's teachings, emphasizing humility, holiness, and introspection, are seen by some men as "weak" or somehow less than masculine. Men pray about something, get an answer and stop praying, because there is work to be done. **Men are looking to be actively challenged** with a "bold" message of adventure, danger, and aggressiveness. Finding the right activities to attract men is also a challenge for many churches. Some congregations make an extra effort to provide times of fellowship and bonding for men by adding off-road expeditions, fishing trips, sports, etc., the things that they can bring their friends from work to.



Following Christ should include adventure, risk, and purpose. Churches should use their men to preach the Word or serve others in some way, not just sit in a pew each Sunday. They should be actively challenged, nurtured and encouraged. Any church that turns the gospel into a soft, congenial love message and minimizes the cost of discipleship, or imputes weakness in following Christ does its people a disservice. Charles Spurgeon decried such a watered-down message in his day: "There has got abroad a notion, somehow, that if you become a Christian you must sink your manliness and turn milksop."

For the most part, males who attend church regularly are:

1. **Older men over 60** - that have been attending since they were younger, and before the modern changes happened to the sermons, worship style and the music. And before women started taking a more predominate roll in the church.
2. **Boys under 14** - mostly because their mothers make them attend. Almost all leave & don't return. The future of the church is leaving out the back door because men are not disciplined to lead.

What sort of godly man do you see when you read the Bible:

- Abraham leaving home & taking his family for a place he knew nothing about because God told him.
- Noah who built a huge boat for years & people thought he was insane.
- God's Prophets who faced down stiff opposition from friend and foe.
- Moses leading an ungrateful people out through a desert for 40 years.
- Even David who wrote many of the Psalms was a bold leader of an army.
- Then we see the Apostles proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah & suffering the consequences, sometimes to death.
- They were lions, not lambs - take charge men who risked everything in God's service. Even their life.
- They spoke their minds & stepped on the toes of religious people.
- They were true leaders, tough guys who were respected for their tough stand of their faith in God, for the truth & justice.
- There were no wimps in the men we read about in the Bible. God called them & they obeyed with all their heart.

If these sort of men were active in you church, would it look the same as it does today?