

## Leading All-Male Discipleship Groups

While there is value in forming mixed, male and female, discipleship groups, there are definitely great advantages in having all-male discipleship groups. The closest circle of Jesus' disciples (the 12) were all men. What are some reasons for doing it? Are there some dangers in doing it the other way? Is a "complete separation" healthy? We will discuss the benefits, the unique challenges men have, suggest ways of overcoming them and share some practices and experience from our ministries.

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### I. Having all-male discipleship groups

#### A. Introductory story

#### B. The goal of forming all-male discipleship groups

1. It is a tool in accomplishing the goal of discipleship
2. To provide a safe environment where growth takes place

#### C. Benefits

1. Greater vulnerability, freedom in sharing struggles and challenges
  - a. In sexual purity
  - b. Safer environment for confessing sin to one another
  - c. Less feeling of guilt and shame in sharing failure and sin
2. A better potential for going deeper in some issues
  - a. Identity
  - b. Value
  - c. Significance
3. Eliminating the motivation to impress the opposite sex (especially among single adults)
4. Accountability works better
5. Mutual support works better
6. Open conversations about relations with the opposite sex
7. Open discussions and modeling of what is real (biblical) manhood
  - a. Receive better the Biblical teaching on being a man according to God's own heart

- b. Learn more effectively by seeing the example of the older brother/friend
- 8. Finding real, deep, spiritual friendship and brotherhood, unity of hearts and life purpose, iron sharpens iron
- 9. Doing activities specific to men

Questions, Comments, Discussion

#### D. Unique challenges of male disciples in today's culture

- 1. Broken families
  - a. Over 50% of the children in the Czech Republic grow up with only 1 of their biological parents, mainly mothers
  - b. The father is usually missing or distant, not fulfilling the needs of the children
- 2. Epidemics of sexual sin in the culture
  - a. Sex before marriage is normal and generally accepted
  - b. Adultery is OK and sometimes even desirable
  - c. Pornography is available to any adult or child
- 3. Many men are not willing to make a commitment and choose to live with a woman without being married
- 4. Unhealthy relationships with opposite sex in general
- 5. Individualism resulting in loneliness
- 6. Selfishness resulting in broken relationships
- 7. Passive men
- 8. Workaholism of many men

Questions, comments, discussion

E. Dangers

1. We can become legalistic about “men’s groups” as the only right thing
2. It can lead to fearing and avoiding relationships with the opposite sex
3. It can lead to distorted, one-sided view of reality. Men need to interact with women, especially sisters in Christ.

Any other dangers?

**II. How to form and lead all-male discipleship group**

A. How would Jesus do it?

B. Identify those you are called / desire to disciple

1. What kind of men in your context are you looking for?
  - a. What is their level of spiritual maturity?
  - b. Age, education, experience, family status, social class...
  - c. What are their main needs?
  - d. Potential and teachability?

C. Define what you want to offer them

1. Growth from point A to point B (area of life, a heart-knowledge, a skill etc.)
2. Biblical content (topical study, a book or part of the Bible book, a Bible study material...)
3. Safe environment, relationships, accountability
4. How long will it take?

D. Challenge each one of them personally

1. Give them reasons why they should want to join the group
2. Benefits
3. Costs
4. Vulnerability, accountability, and confidentiality

5. Ask them to prayerfully consider your offer

Questions?

E. Overcoming the obstacles / practical suggestions (interactive part)

1. What if they have difficulty deciding to join the group?
2. What if they do not have a hunger for growth?
3. How to develop and implement contextualized strategies to work with "experts" and connect with their hearts
4. What if there is a tendency to argue in the group? Tension, disagreements, conflict?
5. What if they have difficulty finding time for a group meeting?
6. How to practically organize a meeting with the group; what should I do in between two meetings?
7. What if someone does not want to be accountable?
8. How to lead in such a way that it results in multiplication
9. What works, what does not work – group discussion and sharing practices and experience

Personal application:

***Suggested Readings:***

John Eldredge: *Wild at Heart*

Walter Trobisch: *All a Man Can Be & What a Woman Should Know*

Robert Coleman: *Master Plan of Evangelism*