**Turf Battles in Your Church**

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*“We want to do a men’s event, but every time we go to put something on the calendar, the women’s ministry or the youth ministry claims the date.”*

*“The men are at the bottom of the budget barrel; we don’t have the resources that other ministries do to accomplish our goals.”*

*“During weekend services, we have to fight for any announcements or to get a mention in the weekly bulletin. Why keep trying?*

*“We’ve done our Wednesday night group in the fellowship hall for two years, but now all of a sudden due to the remodel, the seniors ministry is going to be meeting there. Once again, the men’s ministry gets shoved to the side.”*

*“I like my pastor, but it’s getting harder and harder to feel like we’re on the same team. We don’t feel like he’s behind anything we’re doing, because he doesn’t engage with our activities the way he does the other church ministries.”*

Does any of this sound familiar? We’ve heard these comments from passionate but discouraged men’s leaders who are frustrated with what we call “turf battles” within the church.

The reality is that for any local church, ministry resources are finite—space, time, money, and people. Because of this, leaders can begin to feel overlooked or, worse, competitive with other ministry leaders.

The key is remembering that you’re all on the same team. The ministries in your church are all working together toward the shared, overarching mission of bringing people to closer to Christ, even when the *strategy* differs—whether it’s the sports ministry, the women’s ministry, AWANA, Grief Share, the high-school youth group, or marriage counseling.

Furthermore, the men involved in other ministries ARE ALREADY a part of your ministry. We refer to this as the [“all-inclusive ministry” mindset](https://maninthemirror.org/2019/04/08/how-to-maximize-the-kingdom-impact-of-your-ministry/). Every interaction your church has with any man is ministry to men. Therefore, you have a vested interest in helping other ministries succeed in discipling men wherever they’re involved.

We love the way author and pastor Joe Rigney stated the challenge in his article *Envy and Rivalry in Ministry*: “When another faithful ministry becomes a fruitful ministry, the envious [leader] sees a threat, a rival. The gospel-driven [leader] sees reinforcements.”

Do you see rivals or reinforcements? With the all-inclusive ministry mindset guiding you, how can you approach other ministry leaders to avoid future—or overcome existing—turf battles, and view each other as reinforcements?

**S.H.A.R.E. the Mission and the Harvest**

Here’s a simple acronym to help you remember some practical strategies:

**Serve.** One of the most effective ways to bridge a gap is to serve other ministries in tangible ways. Is there a women’s event coming up? Offer to send a team of men to help with setup and tear down. Plan a service project for the men to wash and detail the cars of the single moms in the church. Or you might have the men help those in your seniors ministry with home repairs. Grill burgers and hot dogs at the youth retreat. Be creative!

Don’t wait for another ministry leader to come to you; take the initiative, offer your help, and set the tone through servant leadership.

**Honor.**When we’re feeling undervalued, it can be difficult to deliberately show honor to others, but that’s exactly what we’re called to do in [Romans 12:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.10)—”Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.”

How can you show honor to other leaders in your church? Commit to regularly praying for them and their ministries. Encourage them with words. Speak highly about them and how God is working through their ministries in the lives of those involved. Don’t criticize them to others, but rather, honor them above yourself. And if there is conflict currently, go to them directly with the goal of resolving it.

**Ask.** Once you’ve shown that you’re invested in the success of their ministries through serving and demonstrated genuine love by honoring them, ask them to support your efforts as well, while affirming the power of their contribution.

When you ask them to support your ministry, do so within the context of how the whole church benefits when men are transformed through discipleship.

For example, when we get comment cards back from our men’s events, there’s a question that asks them why they came to the event. Often, the answer is, “My wife wanted me to attend.” And once there, they may re-surrender to Christ, or join a follow-up small-group, or make a new commitment to their marriage and family. In each of these scenarios, the women will undoubtedly benefit and be blessed through the men’s event.

To show you how it might look to “ask while affirming,” here’s a possible email template to the women’s leader (adapted from our church resource, [Journey to Biblical Manhood](https://journeytobiblicalmanhood.com/)):

Hi Marissa,

We are very excited to be kicking off our spring ministry efforts for the men. I wanted to let you know that we’re starting with a Saturday men’s event about biblical manhood, followed by small groups. Imagine how the women and children in our church would be impacted if every man was living out biblical manhood!

We will be handing out invitations the week of February 8th. I will put some in your mailbox, too, in case any women want to hand them out to the men in their lives. Through the women you minister to, your influence may be the only connection some men have with our church.

Because of this, you are a valuable part of our church’s ministry to men, and you can participate in the spring kickoff in several ways, without adding anything significant onto what you are already doing. Here are some ideas:

Consider giving the women in your ministry area an invitation to pass along to their husband, son, or father, and tell them that you are praying that God would work in the hearts of the men in their lives in the coming months.

You might have a time of prayer with the women for the men in their lives to desire God, pursue Godly friendship with other men, and live according to the Scriptures—all topics we’ll be covering at our event.

Through the women, you have such a huge influence on the men in the church. It is our prayer that God would use you to help men become passionate followers of Jesus Christ.

Is there something we can do to support your ministry during this time? Let us know if we can assist you in any way as we seek together to disciple those at Grace Church!

Thank you,  
Jon, Men’s Leadership Team

**Report.** Inform other leaders about what God is doing in men’s lives. If you asked the women’s ministry to help invite men to an event, let them know how it went the following week. Encourage them through stories of growth and transformation. This goes for your pastor, too! Help the pastor and other leaders feel connected to what’s going on so that you may celebrate together! And give your men a clear avenue for sharing their testimonies.

**Equip.** This is a big one! Equip the men in your church through the other ministries available to them. If you know a man who isn’t engaged consistently in one of the men’s-only opportunities, help him get connected in another ministry. Is there a couples’ group or a Sunday school class that would be a good fit? Or would a short-term mission trip or new members’ class be his right next step?

Your ultimate goal is not to get every man into your groups or activities, but rather to provide every man with his right next step in his discipleship process.

***THE BIG IDEA:****The harvest is still plentiful, so lock arms with your fellow laborers.*

So you’ve adopted the all-inclusive ministry mindset. You’re sharing in the mission and the harvest together. You’ve committed to serving, honoring, asking, reporting, and equipping. Yet… there are still times when those finite resources seem to come up short! The rooms are all booked, the money is gone, etc.

If you find yourself growing discouraged, think outside the box! Hold a car wash fundraiser to pay for workbooks for the new study you’d hoped to do. Ask a few local businesses to sponsor your next men’s event. See if a man in the church has an office conference room he could open up for a Saturday morning Bible study. One church we worked with last year held a four-week class for their men in the back room of a popular outdoor outfitter; the guys loved it! Turn an indoor event into an outdoor event with a bonfire, portable mic, and corn hole tournament. If *within* the church walls all the meeting space is booked, go *beyond*the church walls with your men through jail ministry, serving together at a food pantry, or enjoying a local Spring Training game.

No matter the obstacle, don’t let turf battles dull your sense of calling or resolve to disciple men. We’re all in this together. Therefore, go and make disciples.

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