



BUILDING A BROTHERHOOD



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*"The making of friends, who are real friends, is the best token we have of a man's success in life."
- Edward Everett Hale*

Men are lonely today.

You probably feel this too.

The earlier days of easy connections are over for most guys.

Our college friends moved away, the guys at work busy with their own stuff, and men at church are living their own lives. You can be left without a community of guys to be challenged and encouraged by.

Men are not meant to do life alone.

A man will not thrive on shallow connections.

Men were made for a brotherhood.

Proverbs 17 : 17 says,

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

Yet how do you go about finding brothers born for adversity?

Society will not hand you a community of friends.

Churches will try, but not always succeed in connecting you to a crew of men.

The truth is, if you want a brotherhood, you are going to have to build one.

But that is easier said than done.

So how can you go about building a brotherhood?

Here are some key steps to empower you to identify, create, build and scale a lifegiving community of men. This will not be easy, but it will be worth it.

1 - PRAY

One of the secrets of a godly man's life is that he channels his frustrations to God in prayer. God wants to hear what's in our hearts. King David poured out his frustration, joy and needs before God with total abandon. You should too. And pray Gods word back to him.

"Lord you said it was our love that defines us as your disciples, help me form a community of brotherhood to learn to love well"

"Lord you said you place the lonely in families. I am asking you would stir the hearts of the men around me to build a family of faith"

"Lord stir the hearts of the men around me to see you, and want to become mature disciples. Create an ache for a brotherhood around me."

Committing things to God in prayer is going to lay a foundation of confidence and expectation and give you biblical hope, not wishful thinking that things will change.

2 - TAKE INITIATIVE

You have 3 real choices about your loneliness.

- 1 - Do nothing and be lonely.
- 2 - Complain that nothing exists.
- 3 - Build it.

Take the third option. Resolve in your heart you are going to build the community of men you want to be a part of. This is 50 percent of the battle. And when you step out, you will find something amazing. Other men have been waiting for something like this. Men long to be in spaces created for them. Spaces they can open up without judgement, and deal with the stuff going on in their hearts. Make the decision and start planning.

3 - CLARIFY THE VISION

Men need purpose. The group will fizzle out or fail to launch if the reason behind it isn't clear. Men are busy, they need a reason to prioritize something.

Cast a vision for why the group needs to exist. It can't be, "we are lonely."

It needs to be bigger than that. Here are a few examples.

We are going to fight our own apathy and reach our full redemptive potential as men. Belong, build, burn, become. We are going to pursue the fulness Jesus offers. Fighting for a full inheritance.

You get the idea. But it needs to be about calling men to reach their full redemptive potential and fight the things holding them back.

4 - FIND THE HUNGRY

Begin to poke around some of the guys you know and see who is looking for change.

You can drop hints, ask outright or, or grab a few guys you know are keen.

Its better for things to start small and potent, than big and watered down.

Don't worry about how many show up, just focus on delivering on the mission and providing community. Word will spread over time.

5 - MAKE IT PRACTICAL

The sporadic is doomed from the start.

A man needs something to prioritize for it to happen.

Pick a time, place, and frequency for how you get together.

One thought to consider, how will this impact the families (if they have them) of the men in the group?

What's the best time a man can be fully present without worry about his wife getting angry he isn't around of dropping his duties.

6 - GO DEEP

John Eldridge talks about the three layers of the human heart.

The Shallows, The Midlands, and The Depths.

THE SHALLOWS

This is banter. Its weather talk, sports talk, blog talk, book talk. Its not wrong, its just shallow. Men are most comfortable in the shallows, but transformation rarely happens there.

THE MIDLANDS

These are the problems and issues of our lives.

A son is struggling in school. Your daughter is getting bullied and left out by a group of girls. Work is stressful. This stuff is meaningful, but reactive. Its problem focused, not vision pursuing.

THE DEPTHS

This is the deep stuff of the heart.

This is where wounds, disappointment, frustration, dreams, and fears live.

These are the deep motivations behind our actions that control and drive us.

At all costs. **GET TO THE DEPTHS.** This is where true transformation happens.

This is where a man gets healed and empowered. This is where the river of live is unblocked and renewed.

7 - KEEP IT SIMPLE

Complexity is the enemy of execution.

Focus on the functional, not the fancy.

It would be amazing to rent a private cigar bar and have a pour over coffee station catered for each meeting, but you don't need that.

You can do 6am in a man's garage with some fold out chairs.

You can 8pm around a firepit in a back yard.

You can pack out some Chick-Fil-A booths and make it work.

And make the format simple. Pick a framework and just work it. Here are a couple samples.

DID YOU BLESS YOUR REALM THIS WEEK?

Family

Work

Church

Community

12 CORE WORDS

WORK and KEEP (how you are doing at work job)

LORD and KINGDOM (Honoring and loyalty to Jesus)

NOURISH and CHERISH (How you are treating your wife)

TRAIN and INSTRUCT (how you are doing raising your kids)

ENEMY and NEIGHBOR (how you are practically loving others)

GLORIFY and ENJOY (How you are living from joy)

CORE

Confession (sin)

Others (who are you loving towards Jesus?)

Reading (What are you getting out of the word?)

Encouragement. (Where are you taking steps towards your God given calling?)

READ A BOOK AND PROCESS TOGETHER.

The 7 shadows in Fighting Shadows by Jefferson and me is a good place to start because it touches on core themes most guys wrestle with.

8 - SHOW UP FOR EACH OTHER

You are trying to build a brotherhood. A group of guys who will burn, bleed and build with you. You need to make yourself vulnerable and accessible to these men over time. And you need to help each other in real life. Think more like a sponsor in AA than a bible study relationship.

Help each others families.

Help each other move.

Help each other financially.

Help raise your kids together.

Do stuff in the real world that makes the difference.

9 - CELEBRATE PROGRESS

Mens stuff can be awkward.

It can take time for men to open up, or men emotionally vomit because of how much pent up stuff they have. But keep moving forward and celebrate what God is doing in your midst. Expect turbulence, buckle up, fly on.

10 - DO THE OCCASIONAL UNREASONABLE AND EPIC STUFF

Do stuff. Big stuff. Potent stuff. Historic stuff. Once in a while go full send.

Chip in and renovate a single mothers home. Create a scholarship fund and send 50 kids to summer camp courtesy of your group. Pay for a whole gospel to be translated to an unreached people group. Buy tablets for a struggling school.

Just get beyond yourself. Find the biggest problems in your community and start chipping away at them.

Be men for others.

You never know how a small, committed group of men can impact the world.

TAKE HEART.

All around the world we are seeing a movement of men leaving the shadows and heading into the light. Men who are taking the initiative to build a brotherhood and become all Jesus has called them to be.

You are not alone in this venture. Jesus promised “to be with us always.” The Father is for you, and the Spirit within you.

You may have a ton of questions or objections. But I don’t want to hear them. Risk, experiment, figure it out. To quote Marcus Aurelius

‘Waste no more time arguing about what a good man should be. Be one.’

Be a man who builds a brotherhood for the good of the world.

Pray.

Take initiative.

Clarity the vision

Find the hungry.

Make it practical.

Go deep.

Keep it simple.

Show up for each other.

Celebrate progress.

Do the occasional unreasonable and epic stuff.

Go.