

# Let's get more men in our churches

**IT seems strange to me that only 40 per cent of church members are men.**

Why is there a smaller proportion of men in the Church than there is in society as a whole? This is a problem that affects both men and women - men who want male friendships, as well as single women looking for Christian men to have relationships with.

The first point to note is that men and women are different. God created Adam and Eve that way, and it's God's will that they should be different, but complementary.

I'm always amazed at how quickly my wife can start talking about deep issues with other women when they meet. They hug each other freely, maintain eye contact and talk quite openly about their feelings.

Most men I know can shake hands and say "Alright, mate", but we start to struggle once we've talked about jobs, cars, football (a whole 'religion' in

## the big issue



**Has the Church become too feminine for men? What could we do differently to attract more of them? Mark James from Holy Rood Church, Stubbington, tells us what his church is doing**

itself!), houses and hobbies. There's nothing wrong with that, but it does demonstrate the differences that exist between us.

Men, in general, might not be very good at showing their real feelings, but many men are actually - deep down - crying out for something spiritual in their lives. There is an epidemic of lonely men in our country, and many of them need a relationship with God as well as the chance to develop relationships with others.

But has the Church become too feminine for them? Does the language we use put them off? How could we reconnect with men who say: "I have everything

I need. Church is a crutch for the weak"?

I believe men are looking for proper authentic relationships, comradeship, and people they can rely on, no matter what. They will be attracted by talk of a band of brothers, honour, glory, and an army with a masculine leader.

They'll want to follow Jesus as a commander, a mighty warrior, a man who is interested in them, warts and all, no matter what, as well as a man who has compassion. If we use such language, perhaps it might persuade more men to be involved.

In my experience, men respond to having something to

live and die by. Don't believe me? Then study those 12 ordinary men with ordinary lives who found all of the above in Jesus the carpenter. Is it time for us to find new ways to stir the hearts of men, to rouse their need for connection, meaning and relevance to this life we live?

We at Holy Rood Church, Stubbington, believe it is and we want to work with other churches in our diocese to reach out to men who are not yet believers as well as Christian men.

We want to build up, equip, encourage, mentor and be accountable with other Christian men so that we can be salt and light in our workplaces, our homes, and with our friends and families in our daily lives.

We want men to address all areas of their life from problems at work, job change, debt and addictions. Our God is a God who is interested in all men.

We are inviting Christian men from across the diocese to the launch of our men's ministry. Please join us in our evening of

celebration on Saturday 28 June at Holy Rood Church, Stubbington, as we dedicate this ministry to God.

We start at 3:30pm with some outdoor games, followed by a barbecue at 4:30pm. Then from 6:30pm-8-45pm we will have an evening of praise and worship with guest speaker Richard Meryon from Christian Vision for Men (see [www.cvmen.org](http://www.cvmen.org) for details). He will offer practical advice on how to live as a Christian man. For further details please visit our website on [www.godsmen.co.uk](http://www.godsmen.co.uk) or e-mail me at [mark.james@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mark.james@hotmail.co.uk)

We also believe God will show us how we can open doors and run events for men who are not yet believers. We want to connect and re-engage with such men.

The French mathematician and theologian Blaise Pascal writes about Church: "Make it attractive, make good men wish it were true and then show them that it is." I encourage you all to help us to do just that.



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