

THE INSIDE RUNNING

Promise Keepers is built on two activities: large groups of men in the biggest Events possible; and secondly, men meeting regularly in Men's Small Groups.

Men easily get the vision for big Events. The benefits of small groups are less obvious but usually more substantial. Groups offer a place to:

- Belong
- Be accepted
- Be affirmed
- Be authentic¹
- Be missional

We are limited in what we can achieve alone that is really significant.

A man who had been in a closed Men's Small Group for almost two decades described the stages as:

- Trying to sort each other out (they soon stopped trying to do that!)
- Becoming accountable
- Working together in areas of mission
- Supporting each other as they grew into individual areas of mission

Across New Zealand, more men are realising that they need to work with others if they are to grow spiritually and to reach their community. Are you part of a community of men?



John
John Subritzky

¹From "Mobilizing Men for One on One Ministry" by Steve Sonderman, page 142

Men's Small Groups

Gordon's men's group was formed in 1996 as a result of a large group expanding, and it is still going strong 14 years later! Three of the original four are still in this open group today. The group meets at 6.30am every Friday, come rain, hail or shine. It is an important part of their lives.

Says Gordon, *Friendships built in our group have sometimes been founded on men having come through deep waters and rising up in trying circumstances. A particular situation arose when a brother new to the group arrived noticeably upset. He told us his wife had just had an MRI scan and there was a growth on her brain. This news resulted in that meeting being entirely focused on praying and supporting our brother. We were able to praise God within a week when the tumour was found to be benign. That brother was, and still is, our most regular attendee over the years.*

Another man who has moved to the Gold Coast in Australia remains on our email list and has regular contact with us. Kevin missed the group so much that he founded a men's group over there. Whenever he is back in Auckland for a visit, he comes to our men's group, and when possible he also comes over to attend the Promise Keepers Auckland Event.

One of the other men, Norm, moved to Waiuku four years ago and began another group who meet at the same time as we do. They hold breakfasts for men and women in the community, which they pay for themselves through fundraisers.

As well as meeting weekly, we occasionally have breakfasts together, and social events with our wives. Over the years we have used the Promise Keepers Study Guides, with each of the guys taking turns to lead. The men also have the opportunity to lead communion at Easter and on other occasions if they wish. When one of the men got baptised, as a group we organised and ran the service. We were all involved.

One of the guys brought a Hindu man along to the group, who became a Christian the following week. He has brought a number of young "at risk" guys along as well.

Our group was committed to financially supporting a Tear Fund Micro Enterprise project in Indonesia. Where there is a need and God prompts us, the group is very generous and supportive.

Having been involved in the group from the beginning, one could take things for granted. However I am in a better place because the regular meeting of the group keeps me consistent and disciplined in my walk with the Lord. Holiness, integrity and honesty are issues that all the men and I need to keep. The group provides an environment of acceptance and trust for men to talk about what is happening in their lives. The regularity of meeting and keeping each other accountable, mixed with prayer and God's faithfulness all help to make me a better Christian.

The relationships built up in the group and the individual growth of the guys have personally been a great blessing to me.

Quick Keys:

- Open group, cross denominational
Established for 14 years
- Men who moved to Aussie and Waiuku missed it so much they started similar groups
- Has helped men survive deep water and difficult situations
- God has moved powerfully and transformed men
- Outward focus with reaching non-Christians, giving, and previously supporting Tear Fund

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Gordon's Group

In addition to the open men's group, Gordon is also part of a closed group of three men. These men have come to know each other very well. Unlike the open group, where Gordon finds he has to draw the men out by asking what is going on in their lives, in this group the men have no problem being transparent with one another and asking each other the tough questions. The three men are all involved in some level of ministry and leadership, and have a strong hunger to grow in God. "As iron sharpens iron", they encourage and motivate one another to press on in their desire to hear from God and go deeper in their relationship with Him.

Launching Groups

St Michael's had six guys at Promise Keepers 2009. As we sat eating our Saturday evening meal together, Charlie talked about the pastors' session he'd attended. He was enthusiastic about starting a Men's Small Group. We all responded with, *Let's do it!*

At 6.00am the following Thursday morning we met for an hour, and every Thursday morning since. Three or four others have joined us. It's been brilliant in supporting and encouraging each other in our walk with the Lord.

We have a topic each week – loving our wives, handling stress, combating pornography, disciplining children, guiding teenagers, serving, sacrificing, leading – and we pray for each other. All this while sipping coffee and eating muffins.

Charlie's assessment says it all, *It's the best thing we've done at St Michael's this year.* And those of us in the group say, *Amen!*

Bruce McConchie

#2

A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.

WiseChoices DVDs

Ian Grant is the featured speaker on Issue #4 which we expect to mail in November. The team is working on catching up with the DVDs now the GPS Events have been completed.



Men's Team Ministry to Widows and Solos

Small groups (teams) of four men spend two hours each month serving the same care recipient until the person no longer needs help. All the teams get together for breakfast, planning and teaching before they go out. This works well because men are growing by doing significant work together, it becomes missional when the person tells others why a team is willing to help them, and finally, there is the power of a large group of men when the teams come together for breakfast each month.

The Men's Ministry at Harbourside Church in Auckland has been successfully relaunched, based on these teams that they call Team 1:17 after the verse in Isaiah.

In two years, our Team 1:17 Men's Team Ministry has grown from 3 teams to 13. Each month around 60 men of all ages gather for breakfast, prayer and organising practical arrangements before visiting their "care receiver".



Harbourside Team 1:17 "Upholding the widows, defending the fatherless"

What we did not realise was the huge impact Team 1:17 would have on the men themselves – the whole Men's Ministry at Harbourside has been revitalised. Men form relationships as they work and pray together. They learn skills from each other and help each other. Their self esteem is high because they are doing the right thing. They are much more open to other ministry. The men encourage one another to attend other men's initiatives, and true discipling is taking place. They are comfortable and encouraged to bring friends to men's events and church – and men are getting saved.

Richard Eames, Harbourside Church

Men's Small Groups are important:

1. To bring men out of isolation and build real friendships.
2. To encourage and help one another. Mark 2:1-5 (the paralytic)
3. Men grow spiritually up to seven times faster.
4. For men to deal with issues relevant to them.
5. For evangelism - men reach men.
6. Jesus was in a group of 12 and a "small group" of 4.

Purpose:

1. To know Christ better – spiritual growth
2. To encourage one another – building friendships
3. To help others know Christ – mission

Serving as a Small Group

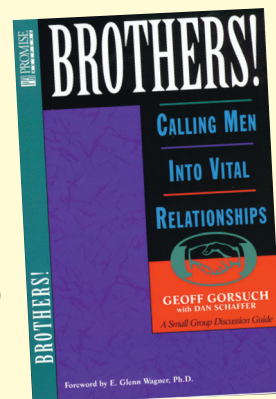
“We should serve in the context of a small group. This is a huge element. If a small group isn't serving then I have to ask why they exist at all. God never called us to get to know each other better and to just study and pray. He came to serve and He called us to do the same. Small groups without serving is like being married but never having sex; sure you can do it, but why would you?”

Geoff Surratt

Resources

Brothers! Calling Men Into Vital Relationships

The textbook for running Men's Small Groups. Every leader of a small group needs to read and understand this book. It gives the blueprint of how "closed" groups develop from stage to stage and the sort of issues that are likely to arise. \$14.00 + postage. Shop online or phone Promise Keepers. Details below.



PK Events 2011 - Book Early!

- ♦ Dunedin 29-30 July 2011
- ♦ Christchurch 12-13 Aug 2011
- ♦ Tauranga 26-27 Aug 2011
- ♦ Wellington 9-10 Sep 2011
- ♦ Auckland 7-8 Oct 2011

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