Men’s Ministry Report 2022-2023

Thank you Nick for this opportunity to provide some insight into our men’s ministry this year. If I were to summarise it into one sentence it would be this; Support, Encouragement and Discussion.

We have so much to be thankful for this year.

* we've had 12 super events that have been well attended, engaging and encouraging.
* A consistent and enjoyable opportunity to get together twice a month at the bar.
* Good relations with the Community bar.
* A wonderful and supportive relationship with Thirsty Cafe
* Guys growing closer to God
* Guys who would not normally attend church getting opportunities to hear about the wonderful news of the Gospel.

Our men's ministry has two main strands. Our monthly men's breakfasts on the first Saturday of the month and men's drinks on the first and third Monday of the month.

This year we started meeting at the Marcham centre bar. On Monday night throughout the year there can be anywhere between 10 and 30 guys who meet up to support and encourage each other. Getting guys to talk openly and honestly is an important part of what we do. Building friendships, walking shoulder to shoulder through difficult times, laughing together and being there for each other.

The other strand of our ministry is the monthly breakfasts that started up again in April last year. Back in 2021 we started discussions about how we could develop our men's ministry further particularly starting men's breakfasts in the village again. A small team of guys met and considered what it might look like and whether it was manageable. And after an awful lot of procrastination and indecision, we planned a series of spring breakfasts to see if it would work. Our vision was to keep it simple, and to focus on support, encouragement and discussion. With the wonderful support of Thirsty cafe we re-established a new style men's breakfast that has complemented the rich history of men's breakfasts that we have had in the village for many years. And to honour this history we invited James Allen to start us off with the first breakfast reflecting on that very history.

Throughout the year we have had nine breakfasts together and three evening events.

The breakfasts have all been led by members of the church who have an active faith and have shared about how their faith impacts on a certain area of their life, particularly their family life or work life.

The evening events have been more evangelistic and have been a great opportunity for us as guys to get together, eat some great food have fun, quiz and discuss deep and trivial topics.

We have enjoyed a event called Beer and Beef with Bill, where we had the opportunity to get together in the churchyard one balmy July evening where Neil cooked a lovely piece of meat and we had the opportunity to catch up with Bill Privette.

Our autumn evening event welcomed an old friend of Nicks called Dan Ritchie, who also runs The Poplars where we stay for our youth weekend and church weekend away, he spoke in a very engaging way about his work as a Chaplin to Gloucester Rugby and how he was privileged to be able to minister to the players through some of their more challenging times.

More recently our spring evening event welcomed Andy Dipper back into the village in preparation for his upcoming new role abroad. He was able to speak very frankly and honestly about some of the challenges and joys of missionary work.

The morning breakfasts have revolved around a short talk and discussions whilst eating. The primary aim of these events are to get together for food And to discuss the questions posed by the person being talk.

Overall we've got an enormous amount to be incredibly grateful for and I'd like to finish by thinking through some of the challenges we've had this year and requesting your prayers for the year ahead and read out some encouragements from some of guys.

Last week I put out a request to our WhatsApp group for some feedback that might be useful for this report and was incredibly touched by the encouragement that came forth.

One response said:

*As an occasional visiter to men's events at Marcham, I have always felt welcome and enjoyed the fellowship of the group. I also appreciated the help I got when I was very ill ten years ago. It is Christianity at its best in operation. - I*

Another said

*I really appreciate the talks at the breakfasts - they are encouraging, show what can be done, but also show that we shouldn’t be discouraged, because others are honest about how they have difficulties and/or feel they fail - J*

Bill’s response was:

*I know I am a long distance member but for what is worth... I continue work with 'men's' ministries and gatherings here in the USA and it is important that men support one another in their mutual life trajectories. Men need spiritual brotherhood - it really doesn't matter what religious tradition you come from or if you don't affiliate with any... men are at their core 'spiritual beings'. I miss fellowship with you Marcham men - you contributed to my life and soul when I was in your midst. Keep up the work of coming together and supporting one another - B*

*Like Bill, I just appreciate getting together with other men informally, and sharing 'stuff' in a supportive and encouraging way. I need all the help I can get! - T*

Another response was:

*One important thing in my view, is the consistency that has been generated. I know I haven't been good at coming to Men's Drinks for example but the fact I know they're on gives me hope (to come along). The curry and pizza nights have been fab and the Men's Brekky excellent. I know it's down to hard work but the consistency is really appreciated - G*

Another said:

*It's good to meet. See each other and chat about stuff. If I am honest I enjoy the time away from family and wife (sorry had to say it) I love them, but occasionally I need a break. It's been good for me as a dysfunctional Christian – M*

My prayer requests going forward are that the guys of this church would know a little bit more about Jesus Christ that we would be more like him as a result.

Prayers for more opportunities to be able to support and encourage the men of Marcham.

Please pray for continued and improved relationships with Thisty café.

I would also value your prayers for how we can deepen and strengthen our ministry further.