

The 25 Most Frequently Asked Questions about Joshua's Men

1. Who should lead Joshua's Men?

Ideally, the Senior Pastor will lead the first group. But other staff members or strong, mature, and dedicated laymen can also lead.

2. How many groups can be led at the same time?

Joshua's Men is not a "train the masses" program. A select few are chosen and invited to be part of a life-changing year together. For the first year, I recommend no more than one or two groups to get some experience under your belt. After that, it is limited only to the number of qualified men who can also lead. Remember, it is not designed to train everyone but to develop your top and potential leaders.

3. Can Joshua's Men appear elitist?

Leadership is required to prevent Joshua's Men from becoming a clique. The key is to have something to offer all the men in your church, such as one-to-one discipleship, a men's bible study, or general leadership training. That minimizes other men feeling left out. Remember, Jesus chose the twelve and then picked just three of them. It's an issue of stewardship. It is important to invest your time in the men that can impact the lives of other people.

4. What about reproduction?

Joshua's Men is not reproductive in the traditional sense. Eagles don't naturally flock well. Reproduction is important and biblical, but these groups must remain invitation-only for a world-class experience. If you can select one or two men from the group each year that stand head-and-shoulders above the others, consider inviting them to lead a Joshua's Men group the next year. But that's not the goal. The purpose is to increase their leadership ability at home, work and church.

5. Is there an ideal time (month) to begin the group?

January is ideal. September also works well, but you can start in any month of the year and continue for 12 months.

6. What about the possibility of condensing the process from 12 to six months?

Don't! You will miss out on the most critical aspects of the process. There are some things that only time will give you. It is very difficult to encourage permanent life change

in men when you have less than one year together. It generally takes that long for the relationships to begin to mature. It's not all about content; the process is critical.

7. How important is the relational aspect of Joshua's Men?

Vital! It takes men longer to open up and bond than it does women. This "opening up" is necessary to move to the deeper "real" issues that men deal with. The reason that 45 minutes is allocated for meals and fellowship is that it takes that much time for the guys to unwind from a hectic day, connect with one another, and begin to focus on the issues of the evening.

8. What about names other than Joshua's Men?

You are free to call this process anything you wish!

9. Are the topics in any particular order?

Yes. The order is deliberate, and its effectiveness has been tested and confirmed. For example, the reason that *Leading Your Family* is so late in the year is to ensure a high degree of trust when discussing this topic. On the other hand, it isn't at the end of the year, so the group has enough time to process any issues revealed. Another example is purposefully placing *Living on Purpose* early in the program. That allows the men the rest of the year to work on their personal purpose statements with the group's encouragement and under the leader's direction.

10. What kind of training do I need to lead Joshua's Men?

I believe God equips us right where we are. I think you're ready to simply start, and you will improve every year (I certainly have!) For practical purposes, it's helpful for you to attend leadership conferences and read books on leadership. That gives you a great jump start. But you'll also be amazed at how much you learn just by doing it and growing as you go.

11. What is the teaching style of the actual lesson each month?

It is a relaxed "fireside chat" style. The setting is in someone's home, and the tone is the same as having your friends engaged in a warm conversation. Yes, you are "teaching" the lesson, but this is a highly interactive experience. If the Holy Spirit ignites conversation on a particular topic, give the group permission to explore. You don't have to finish every lesson

12. Does Joshua's Men have a little of a "counseling" feel to it?

No. It is primarily a mentoring model. Certainly, there is one-on-one dialogue between the men, but if any deep personal needs or issues arise during the year, they need to be referred to a professional counselor.

13. How many men should be involved at one time?

The ideal number is seven; we often have eight. The fewest I recommend is five. With fewer participants, you typically don't have the group energy and dynamic you need. The maximum number of men is 9. With any more, you won't be able to get the depth of sharing you need from everyone simply because you'll run out of time.

14. Where is the best location to hold the monthly meetings?

Rotating through the men's homes works best. This should be voluntary because dinner must be furnished, and the men's families should be out of the house for the entire night. Although this is a big ask, I promise you that it's not the right atmosphere with children running around, the television on, the phones ringing, and so forth. Some of the guys (and their spouses) respond to this with delight and want the meetings held at their homes a couple of times during the year. If you also open your home to meetings a couple of times, things usually work out very well.

For dinner, I suggest keeping it simple. Serve something such as pizza and salads, for example. Otherwise, competition will slip in, and the dinners will get bigger and fancier every month. This may escalate to the point where you will meet at a house to find a four-course meal served at a table complete with a linen tablecloth and fine china!

15. What about other book selections?

Go for it! There is a possibility that, in time, some of the books will go out of print, and you will have to select others. Or, if you have a book that's a personal favorite you'd like to swap for a particular month, just do it. You may need to write your own application guide to go with it, depending on how closely the previous application guide matches the book you substituted. (Some application guides follow the book closely, while others are more generic and could be used with nearly any book).

16. How are the wives involved in the process?

Although they are not present during the meetings, the wives are incredibly important. They must catch the vision too, so they don't mind giving their husbands up for a good bit of time each month. The wives need to understand how much they will also benefit

by supporting their husbands during their year of incredible personal growth. It's smart to set up one or two fun gatherings for the couples during the year and also to make sure that you email or text the wives about three or four times a year. Let them know what is happening, how the guys are growing, and how they can pray for their husbands.

17. Is there a need for additional materials?

You will have more than enough to do and discuss by using this material. But it's a great idea to look for great articles, blog posts, podcasts, etc., to send to your men as additional resources. It's also very helpful to encourage the men to send each other interesting and relevant material that they find.

18. How is the material organized?

A three-ring binder is recommended for each of the men. I know that a digital format makes more sense, but I'm continually surprised by how much the guys want their "JMen" notebook! Even the leaders want this because it helps them to be more organized. However, it's your choice, of course!

19. Who pays for all of the materials?

The men each pay for their own materials. The leader is responsible for getting the books each month, and obviously, books are handed out at least a month in advance, but at that point, each man pays for his material. Their investment is essential. If they do not have enough vision to see the incredible value they are receiving, then perhaps they are not ready for the group. There are, of course, hardship cases in which some men just can't afford all the books — and especially the retreats. In such cases, the church can help out privately and individually. Sometimes other guys in the group will chip in anonymously to help out. Also, some churches pay for half the retreat costs for each man as an investment in the future of the church.

20. Do any of the men ever "drop out?"

Yes, some do, but it's extremely rare. The key is to emphasize the commitment clearly up-front as part of your vision casting for the year. Ultimately, the leader must ensure that all the guys make it through the process. This really isn't an issue. Very rarely will you have someone who feels he isn't keeping up and who may want to "slide out." That's when it's up to you to encourage him and help him to finish strong. So again, prayerful selection upfront is essential.

21. Are all of the meetings mandatory?

Yes. Definitely. Again, this goes back to the understanding and commitment made upfront. If the vision-casting is done well, the men don't want to miss any meetings. Realistically, things do come up. But through many years of doing this, I wouldn't have more than one or two men miss more than one meeting each during the entire year. Typically, we reschedule to get everyone there.

22. Are men really willing to commit this much time?

When they understand what the process is all about and that this is an investment in *them*, they are more than happy to move mountains to be part of Joshua's Men. Your first group may need to operate a little more on faith, but from then on, the word will get out, and your problem will not be finding committed men. It will be which ones there isn't room for that year. I strongly recommend meeting **once a month for four hours — rather than once a week for an hour.** It works extremely well. For best results, follow this approach.

23. How does the prayer partner system fit into Joshua's Men?

At the January vision-casting gathering with the wives, before the kick-off leadership retreat, assign prayer partners for the next two or three months. It's actually better to let the guys pick their own prayer partners. If there are an odd number of men in your group, you will need to pair up with one of the men. The purpose is to deepen the relational bonds, enhance the learning experience, and increase their spiritual depth. This requirement is not difficult, but it is essential that it is fulfilled. Each pair of men should meet one time between monthly meetings for connect time and prayer and to discuss what they are learning. It doesn't matter if this happens on the golf course or in a prayer closet — that's their choice. The key is that they meet. This time is very important. Meeting only once a month, even for at least four hours, is still not long enough to realize all the potential the Joshua's Men process offers.

24. What special things can you do to commemorate the year?

First, look at the Reflection and Celebration Dinner behind the last tab in this notebook. This will give you a summary of a wonderful wrap-up for the year. Another idea is a group photo. I take a group photo every year in September or October. It seems to mean more after the men have invested so much time in one another. Obviously, if you begin on a month other than January (which is fine), organize the photo shoot maybe with a theme, about nine months in.

25. What do the men do when their Joshua's Men year is over?

The possibilities are endless. The obvious choice is to launch them into ministries at a new level, pray over them, and let them go. Remember, there is no obligation. They are done. But if you have led well, there will be no stopping them from volunteer ministry and making a significant impact in the marketplace and at home. Frequently, the men want to continue meeting. Encourage them to do this. They need to select a leader and a purpose. Usually, they slow down on the reading and increase the worship, sharing, and prayer. It's up to them. Most importantly, you do not lead them for the second year. They need to be pushed out of the nest and forced to fly on their own.