

Men's Ministry in Cambodia

A Survey of Church Leaders

October 2012

Introduction

This survey was circulated to 225 pastors and church leaders – and 104 responses were received (46.2%). The purpose of this survey is to discover:

- how pastors and church leaders view ministry to men
- what issues they believe such ministry should address in order to help men to be Real Good Men.

In Cambodia today vast numbers of organizations, both secular and faith based (Christian), focus on, or try to deal with issues relating to children and women. However, issues relating specifically to men and their needs seem to attract little interest. This is in spite of extensive research and study which indicates that many social problems such as domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape, sexual exploitation and trafficking of women result from the behavior and demands of men.

This survey will help us to formulate methods to help prevent men from acting cruelly and immorally against women and children. Furthermore, we believe that as men are key to family well-being, families will benefit if there is effective ministry to men. Our ultimate goal is not only to change men's behavior towards women and children but also to connect the church with men and connect men with Jesus so that they receive the help they need to make such a change.

Methods

A questionnaire with 12 questions was given to 225 pastors and church leaders in three provinces; Kandal, Kampong Thom and Siem Reap. The purpose of questionnaire and each question in the questionnaire was explained to the participants before they completed it.

We divided the questionnaire into two parts. Part One gathered general information while Part Two was more specific regarding men's ministry and issues related to men.

Results

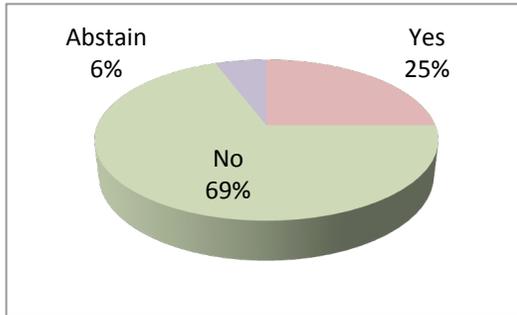
Part One

In the survey we found that the average age of participating pastors and church leaders was 40 years with the majority holding their position for more than 7 years. The average congregation size was 70 people with the majority being between 27-45 years old. Interestingly, the average number of men in congregations was smaller than women with a ratio of 35:65.

Part Two

We asked:

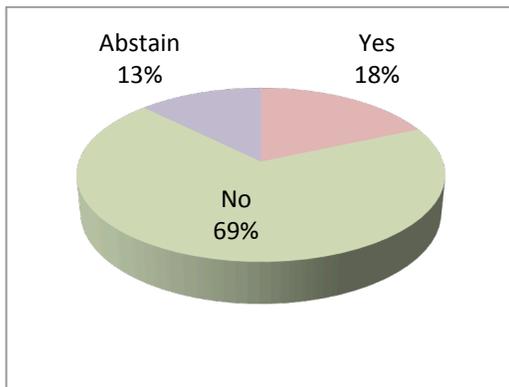
- 1. Have you heard of Men's groups before, either in the church or the community?**



As you can see in the chart, the vast majority respondents indicated they had never heard about men groups either in the church or in the community.

Therefore, it is important that Christian Vision for Men Cambodia explains, spreads and promotes the concept of men's ministry among Cambodian churches.

- 2. Does your church have an established men's ministry?**

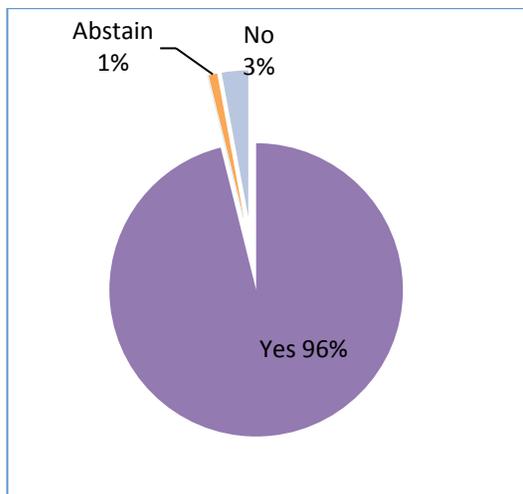


69% of respondents admitted that their churches do not have an established men's ministry.

Interestingly most Cambodian churches have a women's group and Sunday school classes for children. Also the Evangelical fellowship of Cambodia, which is known as the biggest church council, established a Children's Commission and a Women's Commission. However, men ministry seems to be invisible either in churches or in other Christian organizations.

Generally people, including men themselves, often think or assume that men are strong in terms of their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. In reality, men need to be supported in all these needs by the people around them. In this area the church should play an important role in providing such care and encouragement to men within their own church as well as the community around them.

3. Do you think the church need men's ministry?



It is significant that the church recognizes that men's ministry is important. 96% of respondents think their church need a men's ministry. It is obvious that the churches need to have a vision for men.

Comments from pastors and church leaders towards question number 3

- Pastors and church leaders want to see transformation within the Cambodian church as well as their communities through men. They believe that men's ministry is core to their church.
- Men have a significant role in the church and community. They are the head of their household so that they have authority over their family and the responsibility to teach their children and to be a good husband. Furthermore, leaders want to see men in their church be good men, love their family and have strong faith in the Lord.
- Men have potential and influence. They want to see men revived with great faith to serve the Lord.

4. What activities do you think a men's ministry should do?

Education about domestic violence was mentioned by respondents. Teaching the Bible, visiting other men (outside the church) and sharing gospel was suggested by

many. The need to develop good relationships between men was highlighted. Sport activities were also mentioned. Discipleship of men was also proposed.

Interestingly, helping to acquire agricultural and vocational skills was also emphasized as a way for men to improve their living standard so that they can be active in the church and hence not leave to find a job elsewhere.

Some training topics were suggested by pastors and church leaders, as they want to see Christians be the modeler of men, influencing other men through their lifestyle.

- The role of the husband
- Reducing violence by men
- Workshop on how Christian men can win men for Christ

5. What kind of resources would you want?

The overall desire was for speakers on men's subjects, Bible study notes and videos. Ideas about how to establish men's ministry were needed.

6. What human resources would be good?

Many people wanted to meet with experienced people (who can explain how to create men's ministry). Others suggested that we train people to run men's ministry.

Peer support with fellow men's leaders. Regular training and an annual men's retreat were suggested by many.

7. What might be some problems or obstacles that would hinder you or put you off having a men's group?

The main obstacle mentioned was lack of money, however time, resource and disunity (within the church) were also quoted. Lack of tools and skill, wives and illiteracy were also mentioned.

8. What are the needs of men in general?

Good relationships and friendships are the desire of many men who completed this survey. Encouragement by women is a need which often is ignored. Living happily with the family and relaxation were also mentioned. Furthermore, men need to understand themselves more clearly and they want to be listened to and valued. Men do need to be supported by other people, and they need to be able to learn new things.

Alongside the things mentioned above men have a deep need for sexual fulfillment.

9. What are men's problems?

Men's problems recognized by respondents were:

- Low levels of education
- Adultery and lust
- Drug use
- Alcohol addiction
- Gambling
- Using violence to deal with problems
- Smoking
- Pornography and pride
- Having many wives
- Too busy earning money
- Easily led into temptation
- Not submitting to his wife
- Lack of understanding about Cambodian legislation
- Too stubborn
- Spending too much time outside the home.
- Love using power to control family members
- Lack of understanding about family needs (not physical but spiritual and emotional need).

10. How can men help other men (Christian and not)?

- Share the gospel with non-believing men.
- Visit and encourage each other, plan regular fellowship, build relationships between men and men, give clear teaching, be a good example, show love to them.
- Create sport events so that men can be together.
- Offer advice to them when needed. Share experience and love to them.
- Organise a workshop for men on as subject they want to know about.

11. What would help support men in the community? What should the churches role be in this?

Establish a men's ministry to help support, inspire and challenge men. Create events to educate and encourage men. Pray to support men. Create a men group to support men in the church and community. Create an event that all men can have fellowship together.

12. Rank the following subjects in terms of what should be addressed:

We gave respondents 6 options – Pornography, understanding sex, domestic violence, adultery/prostitution, gambling and alcohol & drug use – from which to

choose which they thought the most important. Respondents were asked to rank each answer, 1 is the most important and 6 is the least answer.

Domestic violence was highlighted as the most important.

Alcohol and drug use was voted as second important.

Adultery comes as third.

Gambling was voted as fourth important.

Pastors and church leaders graded pornography and understanding about sex as least important.

Summary

It is significant that 80% of respondents admitted they don't have men's groups but they are willing to have men's groups within their church with support from people who have the experience and ability to help them start. They have a desire to bring men back to the church where they may be helped to live as examples of good husbands, fathers and men.