

## A girl's guide to getting men... in church

By [Carol Howard Merritt](#)

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Churchdom is worried about the lack of men. Because, after 2000 of almost entirely patriarchal rule, women are a threat. And now that women have begun to pastor a tiny portion of Protestant churches, the clergy has become a “pink collar” profession (like librarians, nurses and other underpaid professionals with a lot of education and skills).

Of course, according to [Matt Hedstrom](#), our worries about not having enough men in church are not new. They existed even before we women started getting cooties under our collars. Hedstrom points out that our anxieties over the “twin crises of masculinity and church authority” went as far back as 1890s until it reached its climax in 1920s.

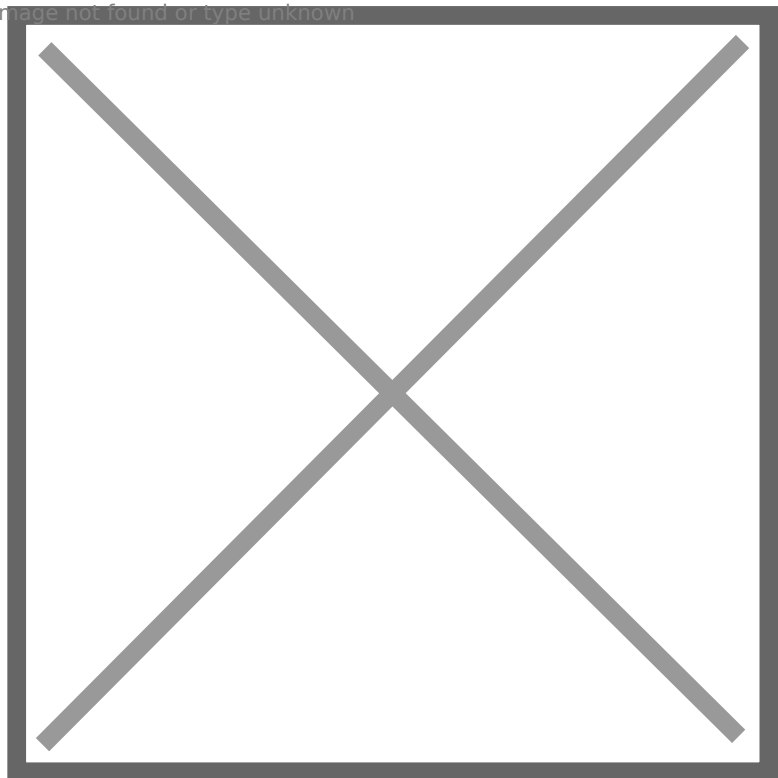
Now a hundred years later, we’re still fretting over the lack of men. You can learn about the Extra Stout Man Church over at the [Man Site](#). David Murrow has started [Church for Men](#), to let us know [Why Men Hate Going to Church](#). Thomas Long did some [exploring on the issue](#), and ducked into a church that felt like a Tarzan set.

As I read the concerns, I think maybe we have this all wrong. I mean, we’ve been looking to men all of these years to attract manly, masculine men into church. Now we're trying to make his man-cave into church. But, let's be honest. Who are manly men attracted to? Women.\*

So, here you go. Here's my classy *Cosmo*-style, fool-proof plan to get your guy in the pew. For good.

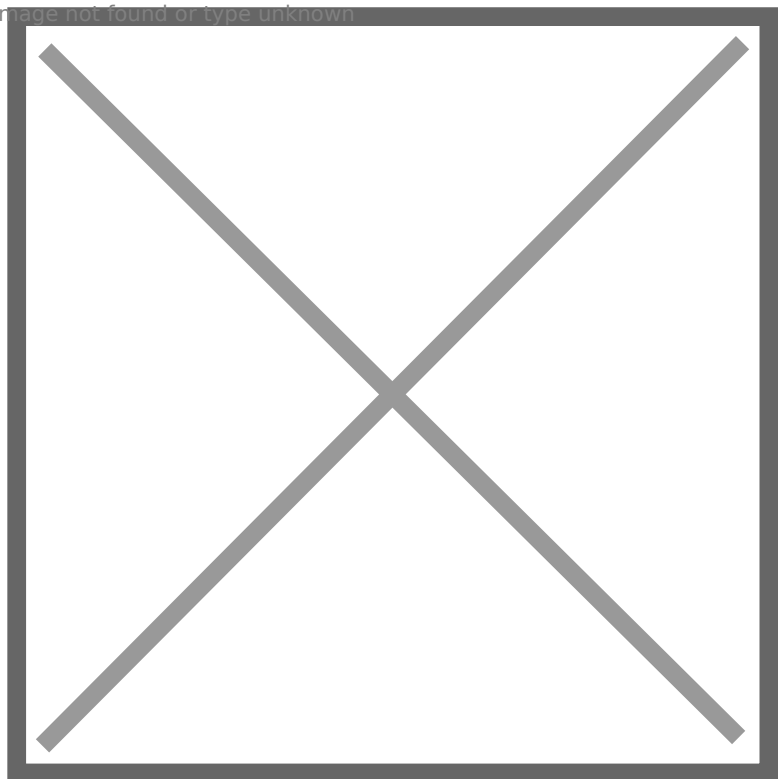
- **Don’t be so desperate.** *Be cool.* Things like this

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scream, "*I need you!!*" And guys hate commitment. They hate to be needed.

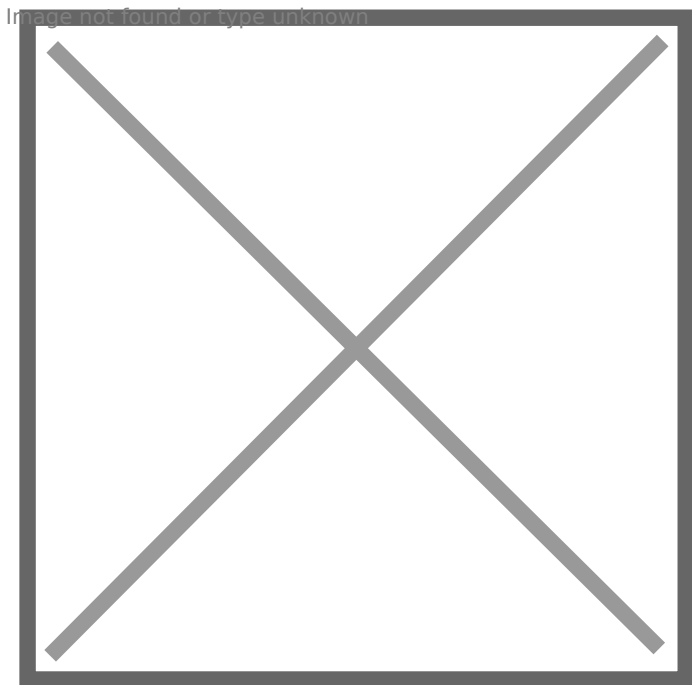
•**Slow down.** I can't say it enough. Cut out the commitment crap. While you learn to quit looking so desperate, go ahead and get rid of any sign of long-term relationship. Membership, pledge cards, praying for one another? You're going way too fast.

You think I got my guy by whipping out an engagement ring on the first date? No way. I waited years before I let him mention anything that had to do with some sort of commitment.

•**Don't call him, he'll call you.** Email after one visit? I don't think so. This is a dude. He has to take control. He has to be in charge of the hunt. If you call him, you're working against his primal instincts. You'll take all the fun out of the chase. It's way better just to ignore him completely. Until he needs you. Then ignore him some more.

•**Start every sermon with a sports illustration.** The more obscure the play, the better. It'll be like you'll be sharing a secret language with the men.

In fact, why don't you just play the game on the jumbo screen behind you while you're preaching? Then men won't be so bored with your boring sermon. (Because, if you haven't gotten the point yet, you're boring.)



•**Half-priced tithes and ladies nights.** What do men want? To be surrounded by beautiful women. So we've come up with some incentives for women to come to

church. (Oh yeah. They're already there. Ok. So, you might want to go ahead and advertise that.)

•**Hold hands for prayer.** Why does David Murrow say not to hold hands in church? Because he's a straight guy. And straight guys don't know how to attract straight guys. But we do. And we say hold hands as much as possible. It can make a man strategic in their hunt for a seat. They have a way to touch a lady's hand, without commitment. Anyways, odds are pretty good that they won't be stuck holding some other dude's hand. *Am I right? Can I get an "amen"?*

•**Hug. A lot.** Need I say more?

•**Hire more women.** Does a real guy want to sit in the pew and stare at a parade of *men* for an hour? I don't think so. Make sure you have a lot of women preaching.

So, ladies, what would you add? How do you get your men in the pew?

**\*Yeah... I know I'm being completely (hetero)sexist. I don't believe the stuff. It's satire.**