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The first time I used ManTalk Cards with the men at my congregation was a huge success! It was a typical Saturday morning breakfast in the basement of the church. We normally had a dozen men there, but this particular morning we had seventeen. This group had been meeting for the past three years, and had spurred off doing additional activities in the community.

After we had filled our plates with eggs and sausage, I passed the ManTalk Cards around for everyone to take a card. To keep it low in pressure (men hate new things and change), I had them pick one of the five questions that they would like to answer. We heard about one man's favorite super hero, another man shared a place where he is most at peace, and one talked about the favorite memory he had of his father. It was great how each man took a moment to share something about himself. We learned about small details about that man that would not normally come up in casual conversation.

Afterwards I asked how each man liked the cards. Almost everyone had good things to say. Later a gentleman told me he doesn't like to talk. He comes just for fellowship and to listen to others. I learned to allow guys to "pass" on answering questions. Hopefully in time he will opt into sharing, but in the mean time I'll just appreciate his presence.

This is when one guy raised his hand and asked if we could discuss one more question. He didn't want to answer it himself, but he wanted to hear the views of the guys around the table. I said sure. He read the question, "Why do you think men have such a problem with pornography?" He then tossed the card into the middle of the tables. There was a few seconds of silence... and then the conversation started. We sat there for twenty minutes talking about pornography! That's a conversation that doesn't come up in normal conversation! However it is a topic that a lot of men have shared with me over the years. The planned devotion wasn't covered, because this is what those men needed to talk about on that morning.

Remember these are guys that had been meeting for three years, and had created a safe place. Once a month, for a couple hours, in that room, there was an environment of peace and safety among all those men. Not every conversation with ManTalk Cards will be deep, but after every conversation you will know more about the man sitting next to you.

The Holidays are here. Are you looking for a small gift or a stocking stuffer for the men in your life? I highly encourage you to order some decks of ManTalk Cards. See how they transform your men's breakfast or your next poker night. Then contact us and share your stories!

Here is a link to where you can purchase your deck of ManTalk Cards:

<http://resources.elca.org/Men-ManTalk.html>



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