



GENERAL SESSION

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Relate

Top Priority: RELATE

by Doug Marsh, *National Director*

A top priority for organizational Royal Rangers leaders is to create a biblical community of men in which the purposes of mentoring godly future men can thrive; to create a positive environment that church leaders want their men and boys in—a setting that sends young men and leaders home from district and national events energized and equipped to support their church and leaders biblically; to organize events that build-up and encourage; to encourage attitudes that unite people and ministries and inspire faith. As leaders, we are required to set the temperature so that this kind of highly relational and encouraging atmosphere can exist within Royal Rangers.

A Blueprint for a Wholesome Community of Men

Encouraging the development of a wholesome community of men can only be achieved with intentionality. Encouraging such an atmosphere may sound daunting, but a simple understanding of the Great Commandment (Lk. 10:27) and the Great Commission (Mk. 16:15) provides a blueprint. In a nutshell, every Christian is called to love God, love people, and to actively share His love with the whole world.

Love God: This speaks to the spiritual emphasis we place on our events. A mentor of mine often advised spiritual leaders like you and me to “keep the spiritual fires of the ministry so hot it purifies everyone in it and runs those off whose motives for being in Royal Rangers are wrong.” Ranger events must first and above all deepen our personal love for God. This takes place, of course, during worship and devotional times, at the altar, and during other prayer times, but it must also characterize wholesome conversations all the time. (If our altars are spiritually hot and our mealtime conversations are spiritually cold—characterized by gossip or slander or laced with poor attitudes toward leadership or life in general—the cold will always neutralize the hot.) The totality of our events must deepen faith, stir up love for God, and inspire fellowship with the Holy Spirit.



Doug Marsh



Relationship building is a top obligation of every organizational leader.

Building-up the community of men and future men in your district is a very high priority.

Nothing will undergird the long-term health and vitality of Royal Rangers than men engaging one another in godly relationships.

Love people: Didn't Paul suggest that those who love God while failing to love people are spiritually useless? (1 Cor. 13:1-3) Rick Warren recently tweeted, "We've amputated the Body of Christ's hands and feet and left her with only a big mouth. We need to talk less and serve more." Our events and interactions with men and boys give us all the opportunity to serve, love, and encourage one another.

Let the whole world know: We are men, we love action, and we love big challenges and goals. God calls us to invest our lives getting into our communities and going to the four corners of the earth so that everyone of the 7 billion people on planet Earth knows how much He loves them. That is a big cause! Our events are incomplete if our attendees are not mobilized and inspired to participate in the Great Commission by giving, going, and praying.

Of course, we have to make our events innovative, fun, and safe. That goes without saying. However, behind the varied activities is an intentional purpose to build relationships and to inspire men and boys to action. This approach transforms our events from activities that merely show the attendees a good time into events that inspire the participants to love God, to love one another, and to influence the lost. Pastors want the men and boys of their churches in a community that supports and enhances everything they are championing. But to achieve this, event designers must plan for and then monitor the "temperature" of the event with as much focus and attention to detail as they do every other facet of the event. This starts with you and me, Royal Rangers district/denominational and national leaders.

The above is a simple blueprint for creating a wholesome community of men in our districts and denominations across the nation. Allow me now to focus on three related and supporting topics of importance to this community:



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Fellowship Within the Body

The atmosphere we are talking about goes beyond the activities on the calendar. It must be part of our culture and influence all our relationships, including those with other ministries. We should be proactive in our relationship with Girls Ministries, Men's Ministries, Children, Youth, and our missions education and giving programs. These ministries are part of our community. If our shared purpose is to evangelize the world—though we are each focused on unique ministry audiences and recipients—it goes without saying we should get along very well.

The Apostle John's words apply: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, *if you love one another*" (John 13:35, emphasis added). What signal do we send to the lost and to those we are discipling if we fight among ourselves? We are not competitors, we are co-laborers in God's harvest field. Let's worry less about whether Big Al stays in Expedition Rangers or goes to Youth and look more at the harvest field to bring in unsaved boys who no one else is reaching. As organizational leaders, let's proactively set a new tone that will change the way our local leaders think and talk about the other ministries of the church, that will refocus their attention on mission, and that will refocus them on the harvest. We lose nothing and we gain everything when we love one another (even if/when it is not reciprocated at first). ☛



Biblical Purposes of Public Gatherings

Here are just some of the reasons public gatherings were convened in the Bible: to fast, to pray, to repent, to worship, to display solidarity, to gain strength or power in numbers, to encourage and edify one another, to give and receive gifts, to pull together resources and help the needy, to learn, to teach/preach, to attain unity, to dream, to celebrate, to fight a common enemy, to achieve justice (such as correcting or punishing wrong doers and more), to show kindness, to eat, to remember, to laugh, to protect one another, to play, to plan, to solve problems, to read the Word aloud, to make public commitments to one another, to serve each other, to show sacrificial love for one another, to make a public statement or garner public attention by gathering large numbers of people together, to offer and receive hospitality, to obey, to build, and more. ☛



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Ministry Creates Fellowship

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

Koinonia – The English translation of a Greek word (κοινωνία) that means communion by intimate participation. The word is used frequently to describe the relationship within the early church. The word identifies the optimum state of fellowship and community that should exist among believers. Rangers ministry is far more than just doing events and teaching the Word. As important as these are, it is also about relationship. In fact, the Bible tells us that if our relationships are wrong, our prayers will be hindered.

Ministry should engender a deep level of fellowship with the Holy Spirit, among God’s people, and toward those who have not asked Christ to lead their lives. ➤

**Let’s do
 fewer events
 and offer
 more quality.**