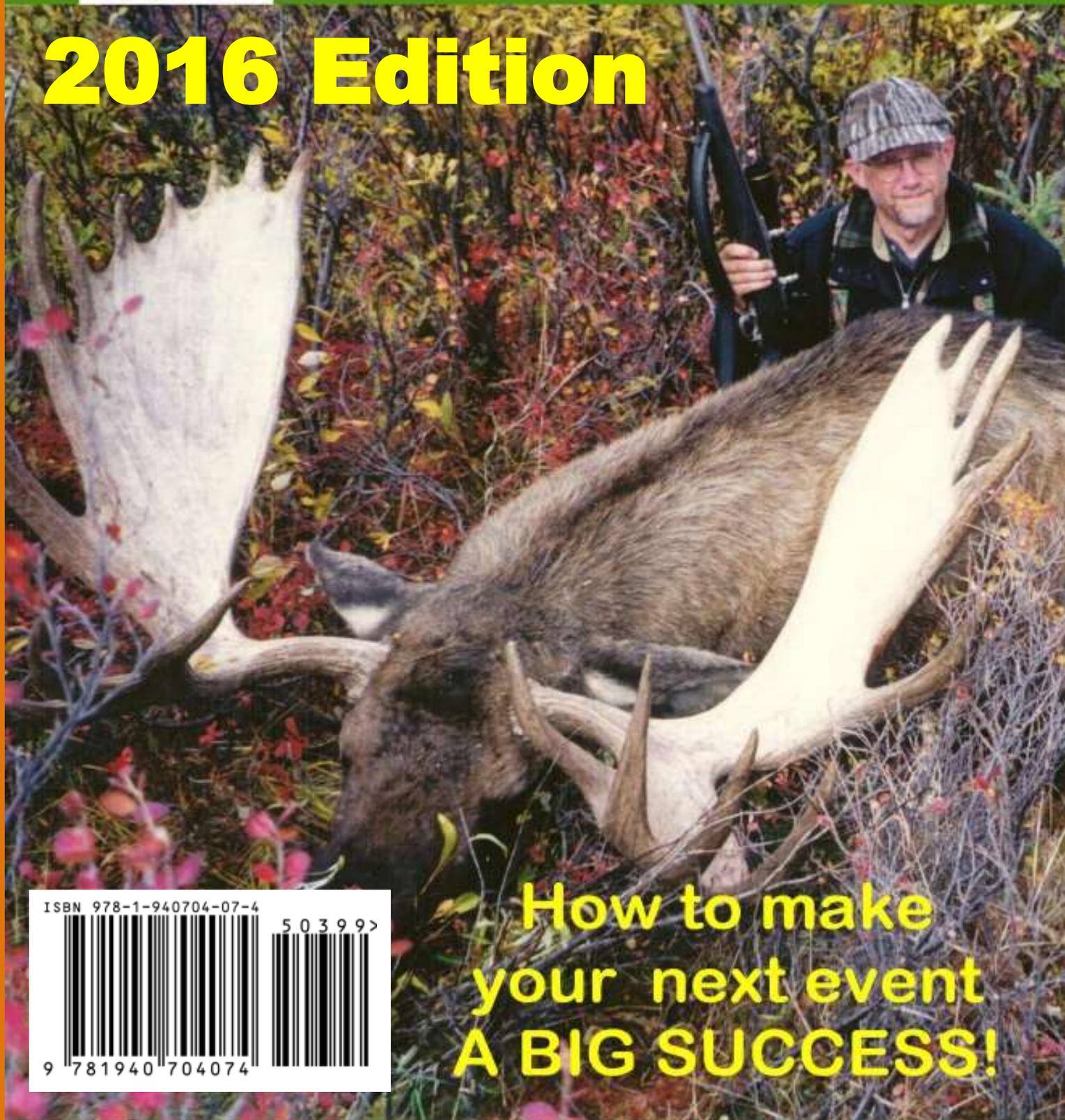




*Steve Sorensen's Ultimate Guide  
to Planning a Sportsman's Dinner*

**2016 Edition**



**How to make  
your next event  
A BIG SUCCESS!**

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## So, your church is having a Sportsman's Dinner!

**YOU PROBABLY ALREADY KNOW** – most congregations have no regular ministry to men.

That's the reality – we're leaving men high and dry. It's no wonder men don't show up.

**BUT, IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN CHURCH ATTENDANCE. Men need a mission.** Men will show up when you have a vital ministry, and they'll become more engaged as husbands, fathers, and citizens. They have to believe not only that church attendance is worthwhile, but that they're needed. It's worth repeating – men need a mission!

### WHO DO TODAY'S CHURCHES TARGET?

- **Most churches aim for children.** That's good. Their impressionable minds are sensitive to God. That's why most people who have come to Christ came as children.
- **Most churches also aim for women.** That's good, too. Women are sociable. They need the fellowship. They see the value of participation.

#### IMPORTANT QUESTION:

##### What if your church aimed for men?

Statistics say that when a church reaches a child for Christ, the family will be reached 8% of the time. If mother is the first one to follow Christ, the rest of the family will follow 22% of the time. But if a father comes to know Christ, the rest of the family will follow 93% of the time! Shouldn't the church do something to target men?

Without a deliberate effort, people and organizations go into default mode. **MANY CHURCHES ARE IN DEFAULT MODE. And for churches, the mission default mode is to target women and children.** It will take a deliberate effort to change that.

**Don't settle for default mode.**

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#### Important Question:

##### What's at Stake?

**In America's churches, WOMEN OUTNUMBER MEN** and it's a blowout! The score is 61 to 39. Yes, Christian churches average 61% female and 39% male. Do you think that makes men comfortable in church? The congregation that appeals to men is rare. *On any given Sunday*, 13 million more adult women are in church than adult men. When women highly outnumber men, do men believe church is for them? Something needs to be done to reach men.

- **Few churches aim for men.** So children (especially young boys) lack a Christian role model and many eventually drift away from the church. Women often take leadership roles so, consciously or unconsciously, many boys get the idea that church is for women.



# Steve Sorensen's Ultimate Guide to Planning a Sportsman's Dinner

**Every Sportsman's Dinner is unique.** There are as many ways of doing them as there are churches. This guide is meant to help you avoid "re-inventing the wheel," to offer ideas you can pick and choose from, and to put you on a track for success. **Although this book is loaded with ideas, keep in mind that what's best in one situation is not necessarily best in another.**

## Here's what's inside:

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### IMPORTANT QUESTION:

#### **Can a small church hold a Sportsman's Dinner?**

**YES!** Small churches can, and they can do it well. I've spoken at successful events with guests numbering from 40 to 800. People often think their main limiting factor is their building, but you can always rent space in which to hold the event. The truth is that *your main limiting factor will be the number of people available to help.* If your church is quite small, you can hold a Sportsman's Dinner, but you might omit many of the ideas in this book, and that's OK.



## *Steve Sorensen's Ultimate Guide to Planning a Sportsman's Dinner*

### ***Put your imagination to work...***

The time has arrived. The doors are open. Men are coming. One hundred. Two hundred. Three hundred. You've done everything you can think of to make your meeting place hospitable to men.

- You have loads of great food.
- You've decorated the place with an outdoor theme.
- Men are telling stories, laughing, having a great
- They're introducing guests to each other.
- You have plenty of door prizes, and lots of winners.
- Your speaker connects, and the men listen.
- Hundreds hear the gospel.
- Many receive Christ.
- The others? You've made a solid connection!
- Next year will be even better!



***It's the highlight of the year for everyone!***

### **Let's complete the picture—what have you accomplished?**

You have brought men together for fellowship—that's not to be taken lightly because many men are spiritually isolated. And it's not easy because men have too few opportunities to share what they have in common. With this event, you have broken some barriers. You've built bridges with non-believers, and suddenly these men don't seem so out of reach.

- **There was that guy who said a year ago that he'd never set foot in a church.**
- **There is one you know struggles with some of the issues your speaker talked about.**
- **There's the man whose son-in-law said, "I had a good time even without alcohol!"**

It gets better. You've collected response cards. Just over 300 people came—and 12 checked the box indicating they prayed to receive Christ\*. Another 10 recommitted their lives to Christ. You've accomplished a large evangelism effort without struggle and without fear. Time will tell how successful this event was, but you have a measurable result, and you are sure to have further evangelism opportunities. You've made a great start at what Jesus said to do in Matthew 28:19—"...go and make disciples."

\* 4% is not an unusual number. When the gospel message is clear, 10% or more might confess new faith in Christ.

***Congratulations!***

***You've made a decision to make disciples.***



## Steve Sorensen's Ultimate Guide to Planning a Sportsman's Dinner

### First steps to organizing

The remainder of this guide is designed to help you design a successful Sportsman's Dinner. Remember — this is a guide. Follow it as closely as you need to or as loosely as you want to.

### Create an event Planning Team

**You will need from 6 to 10 people**, each to head up one of the main aspects of the planning. You can combine responsibilities, depending on the leader's ability and how much work each sub-committee must do. Some work will need to be done well in advance; some will be the week of or even the day of the event. (Don't be afraid of committees — they work when they have a clear agenda.) **Here is a recommended agenda for the first Planning Team meeting:**

1. **Open with scripture.** Find a scripture that can be a theme for the committee, and maybe for the event. It could be one of the verses near the end of this booklet (pages 29-30). Or, it could be one of Jesus' commissioning statements from one of the gospels. Or a passage that emphasized the unity of Jesus' followers. Or a passage that honors and glorifies our Creator.
2. **Offer prayer.** Have several people pray—for the unity and a sense of mission for the Planning Team, for success in recruiting volunteer workers, for the wisdom of the Planning Team, for the people who will be invited, for financial resources that will be needed, for the cooperation of the community, and for the gospel to bear fruit. *Commit together to pray regularly for these things.*
3. **Adopt the reason for holding the event in a way that is clearly stated**, so that each team member will be working with a common mission and everything they do will support the mission. Here's a suggestion: *"The \_\_\_\_\_ Church will hold a Sportsman's Dinner for the purpose of welcoming a large crowd for the hearing of the gospel. We will aim to create a positive, enjoyable setting in which to convey the gospel, and insure that everyone has a good time and goes away with a positive attitude toward Christ, his followers, and our church."*

The mission statement should represent a commitment of the Planning Team and its sub-committees. You want to deliver the gospel—so everyone must represent Christ well. You want to make sure guests have an enjoyable time—so everyone must be in servant mode. You want people to go away with a positive attitude—so in the planning and at the event a carefully planned schedule keeps your guests from being frustrated and the evening from dragging on.

4. **Decide on the sub-committees you will need.** See the list of sub-committees on the next page. You may also need a Budget sub-committee, depending on how your event will be financed.
5. **Set the date for the event.** Take into consideration other events on the church calendar. It's best to plan several months ahead—a year is even better. Create a planning calendar. Decide how far in advance you will need to make various decisions and carry them out.
6. **Set the date for the next Planning Team meeting.** Make sure each sub-committee head knows what needs to be accomplished before the next meeting. If a sub-committee has no near-term responsibility, the head should still report what he is thinking about and will be doing. (Most meetings will take place in the last three months before the event.)
7. **Adjourn with prayer.**



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### Sub-committees and their responsibilities

Below is a list of sub-committees. Some will not be necessary in every church, and in some cases it will make sense to combine sub-committee responsibilities. Also, in all cases, it should be made clear to everyone who the sub-committee head is, so that questions and issues that come up on the night of the event can be handled promptly and without confusion.

**Meal: Main decision—what to serve and how to serve it.**

What are the pros and cons of asking people to bring wild game dishes? Will the meal be catered? If so, can you cut expenses by doing drinks and dessert yourself? Can you reduce congestion by having servers bring salads and drinks to the tables? Who will be in charge of kitchen clean-up?

**Facility: Main decision—where to hold the event?** If you rent a facility, who will be the contact person? Who will negotiate fees? Who will supervise kitchen facilities in the event hall? Who will be in charge of seating? (If your event is held in the church, all of these responsibilities may not be necessary.) Who is in charge of sound, computers and projection?

**Decorations: Main decision—how to decorate for the event.** How will the tables be covered? What will be used as table decorations? Is wall space available for taxidermy mounts? Recruit volunteers to be responsible for the take-down of the decorations and making sure display items are returned to the owners.

**Door Prizes: Main action—make a list of businesses and individuals from whom to solicit door prizes.** Write a brief letter outlining the event that can be handed to donors. Recognize donors in the program and thank each one afterwards with a personal letter.

**Fellowship: Main action—make sure people are welcomed.** What local vendors will be invited? How will vendors be introduced and thanked?

**Publicity: Main action—coordinate with local newspaper and radio for news stories and public service announcements.** Decide what needs to be printed for the event. (Posters, tickets, programs, placemats, bulletin inserts, response cards).

**Event hall set-up and take-down: Main decision—decide how tables will be arranged for seating.** Recruit volunteers to help set up and tear down. Who is responsible for wiping chairs and tables, disposing of garbage, mopping up spills during the event, sweeping floors, etc?

**Program: Main action—recruit the speaker, correspond with him, and make sure all details are clear with him.** Will you hold pre-meal seminars? If so, recruit seminar speakers. Decide where pre-meal seminars will be held, coordinate the schedule, and contact the publicity sub-committee to make sure this information is published in the program and in publicity.

**Follow-up: Main action—reach out to guests who made a profession of faith at the event.** Training should be done about a week before the event. See pages 26-27 for more information.

#### IMPORTANT QUESTION:

#### Do we really need sub-committees?

Your Planning Team should guide the process. Your sub-committees will take charge of the work. **Most sub-committees will not need formal meetings.** Open communication between sub-committee heads will lessen the need for meetings.



## Setting the date—considerations

### What's the best night of the week to hold your event?

Flexibility in scheduling can be very helpful in securing a speaker. So, tentatively consider about three dates, prioritize them, and approach a speaker to see what fits his schedule. The farther ahead you schedule the event, the easier it will be to find a speaker who is available on your preferred date.



**IN THE NORTH**, most churches hold these events **DURING** the “cabin fever” season—January, February and March. That’s a time when winter doldrums have set in and people are looking for something to do. It’s a great time to rouse men into activity in planning the event, and to bring men together to talk about past hunting seasons, football games, and other “guy” stuff).

In the North, spring events are very difficult because spring weather makes so many demands. The same is true with the holiday season. Late summer and early fall can be good, and some churches find good success the weekend before deer season starts.

**IN THE SOUTH** where the weather is warmer, people haven’t been going stir crazy since November. They don’t have as big a backlog of chores that have been waiting for warmer weather. So you’ll find Sportsman’s Dinners going on in April, May, June, July and on.

Never allow a Sportsman’s Dinner to compete with missions events, Valentine dinners, or any other calendar item where people can be emotionally invested. Don’t forget that even though it will be viewed as a men’s event, most churches need women to carry a part of the load to be successful. And remember, the outdoors is for women, too!

#### **IMPORTANT QUESTION:**

#### **What’s the best time of year?**

Sportsman’s events can be held any season—winter, spring, summer or fall, though it varies somewhat from North to South.

***To get the date you’re looking for,  
book your speaker early!***



## Setting the date: The PROs and the CONs

Your choices are weekdays (Monday through Thursday), weekends (Friday or Saturday), and Sundays (afternoon and evening). The charts that follow outline the PROs and CONs for each of those choices, but your situation may be unique. A blank space is left on each chart to write additional Pros and Cons that may be unique to your situation.

### Weeknight considerations—

<b>Weeknight PROs:</b>	<b>Weeknight CONs:</b>
If the time of year conflicts with weekend events such as: hunting, fishing, local sporting events, the NFL Playoffs, The Super Bowl, etc...), booking an event on the weeknight may be the right decision for you.	The main downside to booking an event on a weeknight could be that it conflicts with work schedules, or that it is on a school night.
You may also find that your potential speaker may be in less demand for a weekday night, and be willing to schedule a weeknight at a slight discount. (It's unreasonable to <i>insist</i> on this because it may depend on how it fits his other events, on distance he must travel, or on how he sets prices.)	You may not be able to recruit the volunteer help you need for a weeknight event, because of people's work schedules or other commitments.

### Friday night considerations—

<b>Friday Night PROs:</b>	<b>Friday Night CONs:</b>
Booking an event on a Friday night is often the best because few weekly commitments compete (bowling nights, deacon meetings, PTA meetings, choir practice etc.)	Friday nights might conflict with high school sporting events, concerts, and other community events.
Fridays are normally good family nights.	If key people commute long distances for work, they may get home too late to work your event.



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### Saturday considerations—

<b>Saturday Night PROs:</b>	<b>Saturday Night CONs:</b>
You might think about having the speaker stay over and speak at your church service—you can invite people who don't have a church home back to hear him speak the next morning.	The downside to booking an event on a Saturday night is that it might conflict with a holiday, hunting or fishing season.
A Saturday may give volunteers more time to decorate, cook, and prepare during the day.	On a Saturday night, tear-down and clean up often can't be delayed because it may interfere with Sunday activity in the same space.

### Sunday considerations—

<b>Sunday Afternoon/Evening PROs:</b>	<b>Sunday Afternoon/Evening CONs:</b>
A Sunday afternoon gives you an opportunity to find a creative way to promote the event in the morning service, and provide an opportunity to feature your speaker there.	Sundays in some churches require too much effort to prepare for another large event—especially if you don't have enough people to carry the load.
A Sunday event means you can make a whole day of your event, and have fewer scheduling conflicts.	If your purpose statement is not clear to people in your church outside your target group, a Sunday event might be misunderstood as a sportsmen's party rather than an evangelistic opportunity.
Sunday event can be planned to end earlier than a weeknight event.	A Sunday night might be viewed as a school night.

Having spoken at Sportsman's Dinners on weeknights, and even Sundays, I've found that the PROs and CONs for any day of the week can be overcome. Proper planning can result in good attendance almost anytime. Even Saturday night on Super Bowl weekend can be a great time for an exciting event with an outdoor theme!

Some churches hold a Saturday event and invite the speaker to preach in the morning service, if he is capable of doing that. This can expose more people to him and help unify the church around the event.

#### **IMPORTANT QUESTION:**

#### **Can Sunday really be a good day?**

Any day is a good day for evangelistic outreach, but if you have some who oppose holding your event on a Sunday, don't force the issue. A Sportsman's Dinner should never become divisive in the church. It should bring people together, not drive them apart.



## **Arranging your speaker**

Scheduling the speaker is one of the first matters to decide because it can influence the date you choose. Think ahead, because many speakers schedule their events a year or more in advance. It never hurts to bring a speaker back for a return engagement because people will get to feel like they know the speaker. Also keep in mind that some people will miss the event, and will be happy to have another opportunity to hear your speaker on a return engagement.

**Be sure your speaker has a clear commitment to the gospel.** This is more important than bringing in the biggest TV hunting celebrity. I've heard well-known speakers conclude by trying to say something "Christian," and merely water down the message to "stay on the straight and narrow and life will go better for you," or "God answered prayer for me," or "give something back to God." Avoid this by making the goals of the event clear to any prospective speaker. If you find out later he was fuzzy on the gospel, you may have wasted most of your effort.

**You will miss a valuable opportunity if your speaker does not clearly tell the story that Jesus died for the sins of every person ("All have sinned"), and accepting his free gift will erase guilt and change a man's life to his core ("If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature").** That message is the reason for gathering a big crowd of people, some of whom may be hearing the gospel for the first time. You want your speaker to focus on salvation, steer away from most other issues, and avoid divisive theological sidetracks. If something is a hot button in your church, give the speaker a heads-up. **The pastor or the committee chairman should recruit the speaker. *Don't be afraid to talk over these issues with him before booking him.*** The gospel qualifications are not always easy to find, but beyond that other qualifications are also important. He should:

- be passionate about your event and present a compelling program,
- have the ability to establish credibility quickly and identify with the audience,
- have a professional level of expertise in the subject he speaks about,
- be well-acquainted with the outdoor industry (as a magazine writer, pro staff, etc.),
- transition smoothly into his story of how he came to Christ,
- demonstrate a life consistent with his testimony,
- be flexible and willing to work with the pastor and local leaders.

***Sportsman's Dinner = Gospel Opportunity***

### **IMPORTANT QUESTION:**

#### **Why is the speaker important?**

The speaker might be your most important decision. He should have a strong Christian worldview, hold fast to basic biblical ideas, major on the majors, and understand the church. The last thing you want is someone who will present ideas the people in your church can't support, go off on tangents, use language that is offensive, or make inappropriate comments.



## **Counting the cost**

The cost of a Sportsman's Dinner will depend on many things. Do you need to rent space? Will the meal be catered? Will you sell tickets, or offer free admission? Will the event have support from the church mission budget, and if so, how much? Will you need local sponsors and be able to find them?

Form a finance committee to brainstorm the costs you're likely to incur. Depending on your local area's culture, it might be best to sell tickets. When people pay something, they're more likely to believe the event has value – but make sure your rate structure favors families.

You can also set prices for whole tables. You can give donors of major door prizes a free ticket, or even two. Some churches insist that the event should be free. That's OK – you and your people know your own situation. Sometimes a major donor will even underwrite the cost.

## **How your event can pay for itself**

**There are several ways to finance a Sportsman's Dinner. Funding sources can include:**

**1. Admission to the event by paid ticket** – usually a minimum of \$5, but I've seen churches charge up to \$40 when they really go all out and make the event a day-long adventure with food samplings and a variety of activities throughout the day. *BUT – whether the ticket price is low or high*, make sure your guests understand how much they're getting for their money. (More about that on the next page.)

**2. Local Sponsors for the Event** – a local sporting goods store, a car dealership, a financial services business, or any other local business can easily get enough publicity at this event to be worth hundreds of dollars. You can also solicit businesses to sponsor single tables for \$100, and provide something that one of the guests at that table can win.

**3. Donations of wild game from members of your church** – One caution here: in some states it's illegal to sell wild game meat. To overcome that, maintain a balance sheet that shows the meal is free and that the cost of the ticket goes toward other things such as the speaker, publicity, door prizes that must be purchased, paper products, facility rent, etc.

**What are your guests paying for?** Guests at your event are paying for 3 things:

1. The opportunity to share a good meal with other hunters, served to them by the host church.
2. The opportunity to win great prizes the church or event host obtains from local vendors.
3. The opportunity to hear a great speaker at a professional level, and develop their hunting skills by attending a high quality, one-of-a-kind seminar or program they'll see nowhere else.

**Your guests are NOT paying to hear the gospel. They should *never* feel as though they were tricked into listening to a gospel message.**



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### What is the event really worth to your guests?

It's critical that you give your guests their money's worth before the speaker's testimony begins, or it will seem to some that you're charging for something that should be free. Your event will fail if they perceive themselves as paying to hear a poorly presented gospel message. So, let's look at what value an event might have.

**Meal** – A meal of a sandwich, fries and a drink at McDonalds will cost roughly \$7.00. Your meal should be better than that and worth more than that. People should be served seconds if they want, and a dessert. A conservative estimate is that your meal should be worth at least \$10. If your ticket costs \$5, your guests have already received double the value.

**Prizes** – Door prizes are a big draw, and you should have enough prizes that people have a good chance of winning something. Prizes can be at more than one level. (Many ideas for prizes are included on pages 13-14 in this guide.) If the average prize is worth \$5, add that to the value of the meal and your ticket is already worth \$15.

**Speaker** – Thousands of men each year pay admission of \$10 and up to attend hunting shows where they *spend more money* on the kind of things you'll be giving away as door prizes. While there, they have an opportunity to hear a professional hunter present a seminar. Your speaker must be worth that \$10 sport show admission, so now your ticket is worth \$20.

These are fairly conservative numbers – and if you offer some pre-dinner seminars and schedule them so people can have time to attend at least two, it's easy to see why some churches charge as much as \$40 for an all-day event, especially if it includes activities.

**Keep in mind** – many of your own people will be making a big investment. And if they're giving faithfully to the church, they may not have the disposable dollars that the guy who spends Saturday afternoon at the bowling alley has. And the church member will likely be bringing a couple of kids. So, **most churches will do all they can to keep prices down to a level where no one feels a hardship and the ticket price is not a barrier to anyone attending.**

**The bottom line is this – it's to your advantage – and the gospel's –  
that your guests receive a lot for their ticket price!**

**Here's an example of how funding can work.** If you have 200 guests each paying \$10, you have \$2000. In addition to that, let's say you have four local business sponsors who have each put up \$500, so that's another \$2000. Plus, 10 tables have been sponsored at \$100 each, another \$1000. Your event has brought in \$5000, of which your speaker costs \$1500 (speaker's fee and his transportation to your event, with probably a hotel room plus a couple of meals). Suppose you pay \$1500 for that. The remaining \$3500 is more than enough for tablecovers, place settings (plates, napkins, cups etc.), drinks (coffee, fruit drinks, etc.), facility rent, and any other contingencies. **You have a lot left over, and this is how some churches use these events not only for evangelism, but also to raise funds for other ministries.**





## **Everyone loves door prizes!**

Everyone would love to win a gun, but door prizes don't have to be big. Even small door prizes are always exciting. If you can get a door prize for at least half your guests, they will love it. All prizes should be on display from the minute guests begin walking in.

Prizes shouldn't drain your budget. Sometimes the big box stores have lots of items left at the end of the season. Try asking them to donate, or sell at a big discount. You might get game calls, clothing items, and much more at a fraction of the retail cost. You might also want to consider giving each guest an inexpensive token item with the church's name imprinted on it. Often local stores will donate items (such as coffee mugs or key rings) if you list them as sponsors in your printed program. Make a copy of the program available to them, and thank them publicly when you make your announcements.

## **How to handle the smaller prizes**

It pays to maximize the number of people who win a prize, even if most of the prizes are small. Most successful Sportsman's Dinners have plenty of small prizes, plus one or more grand prizes. Every guest has an opportunity to win both. There are many ways to handle the smaller prizes. Here are just two examples:

1. Hand every guest a numbered ticket. You can use different colored tickets for men, women and children. (You don't want a child to win adult clothing.)
2. Each guest puts his name on his admission ticket. When his name is called he receives his prize.

The smaller prizes can be distributed before or after your gospel presentation, but distribute them quickly to avoid restless guests.

### **Distributing door prizes quickly adds action, anticipation and excitement:**

- Use runners to deliver the prizes. Have the runner hold the prize up as it is being drawn for, and ask the guests to hold a hand up high when they hear their names called. *Runners run.*
- Do not describe the smaller prizes as they are being drawn. This will not build up excitement. The excitement comes from making things happen fast.
- Set up prizes on a table, and have the winners come forward to choose a prize. Tell them several guests will be choosing all at once. Use the honor system – trust your guests.

### **Here are some great door prize ideas:**

Knives  
Deer drags  
Fluorescent orange vest  
Hats  
Camo shirts  
T-shirts  
Gloves  
Wool Socks  
Backpacks & Fanny packs  
Books & DVDs  
Outdoor theme coffee mugs  
Flashlights  
Oil changes  
Gift cards  
Fishing rods & reels  
Tackle boxes  
Fishing lures  
Scouting cameras  
Riflescopes  
Rangefinder  
Camping chairs  
Sleeping bags  
Stadium blankets  
Picnic coolers  
Turkey decoys  
Treestands  
Art prints  
Game calls  
Emergency kit  
Certificate for guided fishing  
Taxidermy mount  
Scent elimination products  
Unique homemade items  
Archery gear  
Photo albums  
Turkey vest



## **The Grand Prize!**

The Grand Prize can be a hunting rifle or shotgun, a crossbow, a treestand, a nice pair of binoculars—it should be something with a high price tag. If you distribute smaller door prizes before the speaker presents his program, save the grand prize for the end of the night. This gives guests a reason to stay. How to pay for it? Often, someone is willing to donate a grand prize.

## **How to handle the Grand Prize**

Design your grand prize entry form as a response card with three categories of information.

- 1. Contact information for the guest:** Name, address, phone number, email address. This information can be used the next year to notify people about the event, and for follow-up on number 3 below.
- 2. Provide a means of giving feedback on the event.** Ask simple questions about the food, the speaker's presentation, the publicity, ideas for next year, etc.
- 3. Give each person an opportunity** to request prayer, or ask for information about the church.
- 4. Your card should provide check boxes** so a guest can indicate if he made a profession of faith that night, or rededicated his life to Christ, or if a guest is already a Christian and is looking for a church home.

This information should be followed up within a week. (See page 26.)

### **IMPORTANT QUESTION:**

#### **Is a Grand Prize necessary?**

Having a grand prize is your key to gathering information. The most effective way of handling grand prizes is to have a separate drawing from the smaller prizes, and hold it after the speaker is finished. Everyone who stays to the end is eligible to enter.

Some churches add a check box for the guest to request a visit from the pastor. This may not be a good idea because if a person checks that he received Christ, but does not check that he desires a visit, you risk a misunderstanding when making the follow-up contact. **A sample layout for a response card is on page 22.**

### **Who to ask for door prizes**

#### Local sporting goods stores:

These are perfectly targeted to your audience. Don't put pressure on them for a particular item.

Many people overlook some of the unconventional businesses that may be glad to contribute, including...

#### Grocery stores:

A great source for gift cards

#### Restaurants:

Also a great source for gift cards

#### Gas stations:

Gift cards

Car washes

#### Automotive service shops:

Oil changes

Tire rotations

#### Home improvement stores:

Tools

Small appliances

#### Big box stores:

Often willing to give end-of-season items for free or at a big discount. Ask if they can tell you when they will begin markdowns.

#### Local artisans:

A source of quality homemade items

#### Fitness club:

Free year's membership with exercise advisor

#### Garden shops:

Shrubbery

#### Golf courses:

Free greens fees

Free use of cart



## **Publicity—getting by without a “pro”**

**Get the news out:** Many churches have people with computer skills that can help with layout and design of your publicity materials. Here are some suggested avenues for getting the word out to the community:

- **Newspaper article**—about two weeks before the event. (See sample on page 25.)
- **Posters in store windows**—3 to 4 weeks before the event. (See sample, page 24.)
- **Local radio public service announcement**—repeated several times during the two to three weeks prior to the event. (Only essential information needed. Someone at the radio station should be able to adapt the newspaper article into a radio spot.)
- **Local radio interview**—contact your radio station and ask if there's a broadcast format that would do a radio interview. They may be able to interview your speaker by phone.
- **Email campaign**—three to four weeks before the event, or right before ticket sales begin, send emails to the men in your church and ask them to forward it to their friends..
- **Website**—Make a website or Facebook page for this event, and dedicate a page of your church's website to this event. Make it the “landing page” for your advertising.



**Printed materials:** You may want to prepare some additional printed materials for your event. The more you do, the more professional your event will look, and the more value your guests will see in your event. Reproduce them inexpensively on a home or office printer, or check the local copy shops for pricing. (Samples of a few printed materials are on pages 22-24.)

- **Posters advertising the event.** Write a thank-you note to the store owner or manager and drop it off when you pick up your posters right after the event.
- **Tickets.** Can be printed on card stock, up to 8 per sheet. Color photo adds value. Give basic information (date, time, place), provide room for the guest's name to be written if you plan to use the tickets in a drawing.
- **Place mats, 11 X 17.** By using a picture of the speaker, with biographical information you can shorten the live introduction simply to welcoming the speaker. You may be able to get a business to sponsor the placemats, and put the business's name and logo on it.
- **Program.** Include the meal menu, picture of the speaker, title of his presentation, list of sponsors, a short paragraph about the church, and church contact information.
- **Response cards.** Be brief. Do not make it seem like a survey.



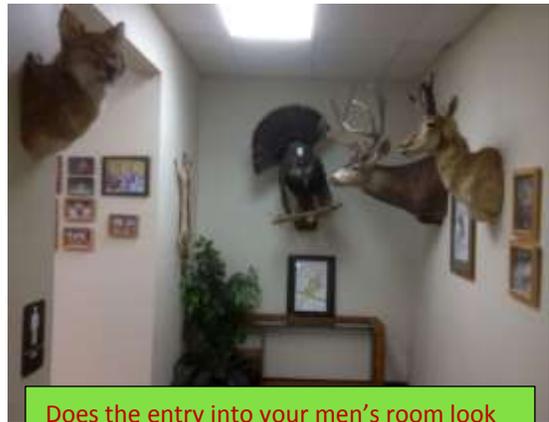
## Décor—Remember, it's an event for men

Does décor matter to men? You bet it does! Men will enjoy the event more if you make it a man's environment. You'll find many ways to do that, from centerpieces on the tables, to taxidermy in the men's room. (I spoke at one church where the entry to the men's room had taxidermy on display *all the time!*)

Life-like game mounts create an atmosphere that stimulates conversation because every animal and every hunt has a story. You'll have fun setting up your venue to look like a hunting lodge. You can really go all out. Maybe someone in your church

Contest! Win a trail camera—guess how many shed antlers are in the box!

can create the façade of a hunting camp, and three or four guys can put on a funny skit to entertain the crowd. You can easily make up a story. It can be anything from strange sleeping habits, to how *NOT* to track, to oversleeping on opening day and shooting the big one from the camp porch.



Does the entry into your men's room look like this? (Yes, the gobbler is crooked, but this still makes a great impression on men.)



Lots of guys will be proud to loan their mounts for all to see.

Ask volunteers to bring in deer heads, bear rugs, or other taxidermy (it doesn't need to be "trophy" quality), and cover the walls with them. Hang artwork. Invite a taxidermist to display his work, or perhaps a local gunsmith or custom call maker, and allow them to make brochures and business cards available. These folks will add credibility.



Set up displays of mounts, antlers, turkey tailfans—anything at all will get guys telling stories.

Enhance place settings with a placemat featuring the speaker's picture and biography, and you can include an outdoor gospel tract, mints, or other "favors." Try to put a gift from the church at



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each place setting—maybe a mug with the church logo or the speaker's logo (if he has one), or some kind of small tool or an inexpensive flashlight. Or, maybe two pieces of homemade fudge, or a pen for guests to take home, since they will be filling out response cards.



Centerpiece idea—flowers for a men's event? Sure! Whatever's available (cut or fresh) displayed in an empty ammo box.

Centerpieces contribute to the atmosphere and can be anything from a collection of pine cones to a set of deer antlers.

They can be photos of some of your people with animals they've harvested. Old camping lanterns, empty shell boxes with flowers in them, shed deer antlers, or anything associated with hunting, fishing or camping will have everyone talking about the good old days, or the huge buck Grandpa killed right after the war.



Centerpiece idea—a jar of empties sitting on some feathers. Everyone will check out what caliber the shells are.

Some companies will provide banners promoting their products. And some churches make their own banners featuring the name of their event, and use them year after year.

Sometimes, people get a mental block when it comes to ideas, but here's a time when almost anything goes. Remember, you're not trying to out-do Cabela's—you're just trying to create an atmosphere. It ought to be fun, not be taken too seriously, and be interesting to your guests.



Encourage men to bring artifacts and pictures to display. Note in the foreground—a string of Christmas lights, covered by different colors of empty plastic shotgun shells.



It's easy for a handyman in the church to build some racks where you can hang mounts of deer, bears, or other trophies. You can even create an award for last season's biggest buck, the youngest person to shoot a deer, or the oldest!



## **Seminars—a full slate of programming**

Depending on the size of your facility and availability of space, you can invite local experts who have hunting, fishing, trapping or shooting expertise. Be sure to give them two free courtesy tickets to your event.



Does your local high school have a trap team? Invite someone share about it.



Is there a good trapper in your area? Ask him to display some furs and do a seminar.



Is there a local gunsmith? Ask him to demonstrate gun cleaning techniques.



Do you know a fishing guide? Invite him to give “10 Tips for Catching Bigger Bass.”



What about sportsman's clubs? Ask an officer to come and talk about its benefits.



Do you know a good turkey hunter? Ask him to talk about scouting or calling techniques.



Do you know a good deer hunter? Ask him to do a clinic on deer calling.



Do you know a wildlife photographer? Ask him to do a seminar on good field photos.



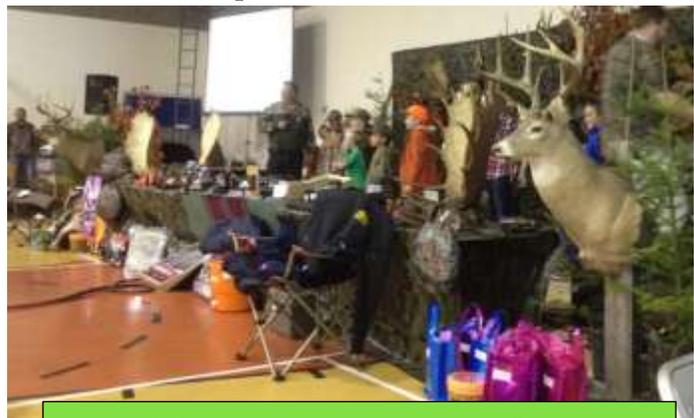
Have a contest for kids and award prizes. A game calling contest is easy to pull off. Make it fun, not serious. If you have both boys and girls, have the audience choose winner in several categories so all the kids are happy. Winners can choose their prize from a few of the door prizes you've pre-selected, and give each of them a consolation prize.

You can expand your event any number of ways. Schedule seminars for a half hour to 45 minutes, and plan it so guests can attend two of them before dinner is served. You can have a video playing for people to watch if they don't want to attend a seminar. It may be difficult to fit all of this in, so choose whatever fits your situation, and don't over-program it.

### **IMPORTANT QUESTION:**

#### **Should we use local experts?**

Just because you have a speaker coming in doesn't mean you can't use local experts. You may not want every local expert sharing the gospel with a large group, but you can find other ways they can add value. They will appreciate being asked, and they will add credibility to your event.



Several kids are competing in a moose calling contest.



## **Planning to draw the right crowd**

### **Who will come? Lots of people will want to be there.**

- They come because it's a good night out.
- They come because of the door prizes.
- They come because of the great food.
- They come because they want to learn something about hunting.
- They come because they enjoy being at this kind of event.
- They come because they "make the circuit," attending all these events in the area.

**A more important question is, "Who do you want to come, and how do you get them there?"**

### **What makes a successful Sportsman's Dinner?**

**The most successful Sportsman's Dinners succeed  
at gathering people who don't know Christ.**

**A story:** A couple of years ago I spoke at a well-planned Sportsman's Dinner in southern Pennsylvania. The food was great, and several vendors were set up in the lobby. Men from the host church were easy to identify. They welcomed people and helped them find a place at a table. The event was well publicized, it was a packed house, and excitement was building. All 400 people were excited to be there.

At the end of the meal I presented one of my programs on wild turkeys, shared my testimony and offered Christ as the one who changes hearts and redeems broken people.

Then the pastor took over. He thanked the people for coming, and guided all 400 in filling out a response card. One of the lines on the response card was this: "I prayed to receive Jesus Christ tonight," *and he was very explicit in explaining what that means.*

A little later after almost everyone was gone and the building was quiet I was packing up my things. The pastor walked up to thank me and he had the stack of response cards in his hand. I asked how long it would take him to go through them. He said he already had gone through them, and 100 men accepted Christ that night. 100 out of 400 who attended!

Why was this event so successful? I can tell you it wasn't because I was the speaker. I did the same things I do when one person gets saved, or 10, or 20, or 30. The difference was that this church made a conscious and prayerful effort to get non-believers to attend.

#### **IMPORTANT QUESTION:**

**What draws more people, the speaker or the planning?**

The planning is important because that's how you gather people who need to hear the gospel. The speaker is important because, after you've done all that work, you want someone who will present a clear testimony and offer the gospel effectively. **If you don't get non-believers to your event, you can't expect anyone to walk out as a new believer at the end of the evening.**



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### Ten things you can do to bring in non-believers

1. Promote the event not only by publicizing it in the church, but telling your people *why* you're holding this event. Everyone should know the purpose is to reach non-believers.
2. Announcements should go something like this: "The upcoming Sportsman's Dinner is an opportunity for you to bring your friends to a place where they will hear the gospel. We want you to attend, but we especially ask that you bring your friends who don't know Christ. We promise you that your friends will hear the gospel in a positive way, and you can promise them that they will love being here. It's going to be a great night."
3. All your publicity materials should make clear that this is not a church event – it is an event for the community. To do that, use publicity methods that go beyond the church bulletin and posters. Get a radio interview with a local talk program. Buy some 15- or 30-second radio promotions. Have a news story in the local newspaper. (See page 25.)
4. Publicity materials should mention the names of organizations who will have vendor displays – taxidermists, sportsman's clubs, the state game agency, gunsmiths, sporting goods stores, etc. You're not giving these people a platform to speak from, but by their presence you are saying you have a wider audience than just your church.
5. Invite neighboring businesses or organizations or business owners in your church to bring guests, clients, or members. Reserve a table for them at a greatly reduced price. Maybe you can even find someone in the church who will bear the cost of that table when he knows it will be filled with people who need to hear the gospel.
6. You might receive calls from neighboring churches asking to buy a quantity of tickets. Thank them for their interest and explain to them that you would love to have them, but that you're not measuring the success of this event by the number of seats that are filled. You're measuring it by the number of non-believers who fill the seats.
7. Have your people invite their friends who don't know Christ. Try to discourage your people from sticking together with the people they are close to. Instead, encourage them to bring non-believing friends they can introduce to their church friends.
8. Have a plan for the tickets to sell out quickly by doing as much "pre-sale" as possible before the tickets go on sale (or before they are distributed if they're free). **"Pre-selling" is really pre-planning**, and it will help you accomplish at least three things. It will:
  - A. Create urgency once tickets are available.
  - B. Add a greater sense of value to the tickets.
  - C. Let you plan how to get them into the hands of non-believers before they're all gone.
9. Make it a goal for half the people at each table to be there because of a personal invitation. Don't just depend on your public announcements. Personal invitations are primary, and the public announcements should reinforce them.
10. Your target audience is the lost, so pray that your people will get that message and will see the excitement of a room full of non-believers hearing the gospel.



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Part of the crowd of 400, where 100 people said they prayed to receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

### **So, what happened to those 100 people?**

I said to the pastor, "Now what do you do? Following up on 100 people is a big job!"

He said, "That's what we're good at. We'll sort these into contact lists and link each person to a believer we think they'll identify with. We'll contact all of them within a week."

It's important to take something of value (see page 27) to each one and follow up a second time within two weeks. Invite them to another event. It doesn't have to be a big event. It could be an informal breakfast with some men from the church, or a study group, or a family event, or something for their kids. **And don't just invite them – it's critical to make sure they know someone who will be there.**

Obviously not all 100 of those people became members of that church, and not everyone who makes a commitment at your event will become part of your fellowship. Some will come from too far away to make your church an option for regular attendance. Some have a history with another local church – if it's a gospel-preaching church, encourage them to re-connect unless they have a negative history there. Some seed falls on rocky soil. But it's important to follow up on all the people who check that they've received Christ, or who make a positive comment about the church, or who say they are looking for a good place to attend church. Past experience told the pastor that of those 100 people, a dozen or more would become committed believers and disciples of Jesus.

What would happen to those 100 people if no one follows up on them? Most would probably say they are Christians, but few would become connected to a vital church where the gospel is preached, and even fewer are likely to become fully devoted followers of Christ. Follow-up is critical to a successful event. (See pages 26-27.)



## **Resources – producing printed materials**

**Response cards:** These can be printed four to a sheet of paper, then cut, for a 4¼" x 5½" finished size. Add a small photo or other graphic to dress it up. **DO NOT make it so crowded that your guests feel like they're taking a survey.** If you want more feedback after the event, set something up on your website to solicit responses, or send an email follow-up.

All of us at Cornerstone Church welcome you to our Sportsman's Dinner. Thank you for coming. If you'd like to be included in our Grand Prize drawing, please fill out the information below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

This information will also be used to invite you to future sportsman's events held by Cornerstone Church.

I want to receive notices about next year's event and other events for men.

### **Next Steps Feedback Form:**

Did you enjoy your meal? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you learn something from the speaker? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about this event? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/Suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Check any that apply:**

NEW BELIEVER – I prayed to receive Jesus Christ as Savior tonight.

STARTING OVER – I have not been living the life Christ called me to and I recommitted my life to Christ tonight.

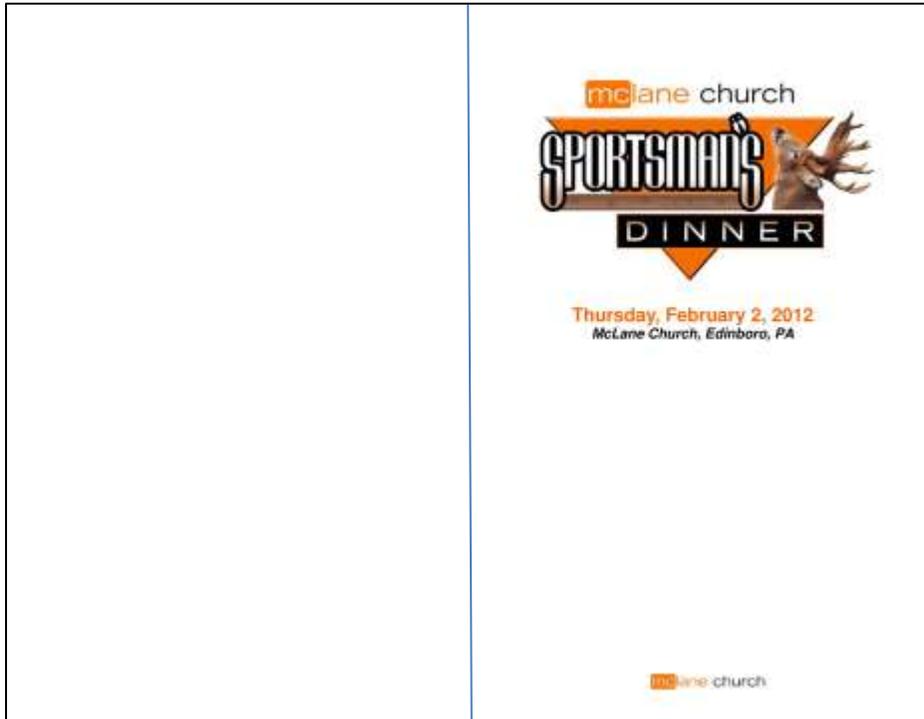
MOVING FORWARD – I am a Christian believer, and I was encouraged in my faith tonight.

I am a Christian believer, but I'm looking for a church home.



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**Program Brochures:** This sample was printed both sides on an 8½" x 11" sheet, then folded in half. This church printed logos of companies that provided door prizes. They left the back side blank, but could have used the space for pictures, or in any number of ways.



## WELCOME

Welcome to McLane Church and our 2nd annual Sportsman's Dinner! We're glad you are here and we hope you enjoy the events we have scheduled for this evening. If there is something you need or a question you have about our church, please feel free to ask anyone with a nametag. We are happy to help in any way we can... thanks for being here tonight as our guest!

- The staff and members of McLane Church

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

(times are approximate)

5:30 PM—6:00 PM	Doors open, appetizers, beverages
6:00 PM	Seating, welcome and prayer
6:05 PM—7:00 PM	Dinner
7:00 PM—7:45 PM	Dessert and door prizes
7:45 PM—8:45 PM	Steve Sorensen presentation
8:45 PM—8:50 PM	<b>MAJOR</b> door prizes
8:50 PM—9:00 PM	Dismissal

12511 Edinboro Road, Edinboro, PA 16412  
814-734-1917 or 1-800-McLane6 www.mclanechurch.org

Thanks to our fine sponsors!  
Please support these local businesses:



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**Posters:** Posters can be printed on ordinary 8½" x 11" paper. If you have access to a larger printer, you can make them larger. Below is a sample of what Steve Sorensen can help provide. Download content for making posters from [www.EverydayHunter.com](http://www.EverydayHunter.com), and adapt the materials for your event. If you have someone who has graphic arts skills, the sky's the limit.

**New Springfield Church of God**  
presents outdoor writer  
**Steve Sorensen**  
with a program on  
**The Path to Your  
Next Mature Whitetail**





**Saturday,  
March 9, 2013**

Doors open at 5:00 PM  
Dinner at 6:00 PM  
Presentation at 7:00 PM  
Dessert & Door Prizes to follow

Ticket prices: \$10  
Children 10 years old & under: \$5

**Call...**  
**(330) 549-2060**  
New Springfield Church of God  
3649 E. Garfield Rd  
New Springfield, OH 44443

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Life-Like Taxidermy

**Steve Sorensen** is 3-time winner of "Best Newspaper Column" in Pennsylvania and has written for Deer & Deer Hunting, North American Whitetail, Outdoor Life, Sports Afield, Ohio Valley Outdoors, Pennsylvania Game News, The Varmint Hunter Magazine, and more. He is a field editor for Bear Hunters Online. Besides whitetail hunting, he enjoys hunting turkeys, woodchucks and the eastern coyote, and also has an amazing story about Alaska moose hunting. Check him out at [www.EverydayHunter.com](http://www.EverydayHunter.com).






## Steve Sorensen's Ultimate Guide to Planning a Sportsman's Dinner

**Placemats:** If you have access to a printer that can print on an 11" x 17" sheet, you can make nice placemats for your place settings. Ask your speaker to provide a photograph and some biographical information. That way guests will have the speaker's biographical information in front of them, and you can save time with an introduction by referring them to that, and simply ask the people to welcome him. You can also add information about the church, or your men's ministry calendar items.

**Newspaper article:** Copy and paste into your word processing program, and where underlined, add information to reflect your event. This news story is about a whitetail deer presentation. **For other news stories that describe different programs, please go to [www.EverydayHunter.com](http://www.EverydayHunter.com).** If you invite a



different speaker and he doesn't have a pre-written news article, just use this one as a model.

### Outdoor Writer to Speak at \_\_\_\_\_

Outdoor writer Steve Sorensen will be speaking on "The Path to Your Next Mature Whitetail" at CHURCH NAME, CHURCH ADDRESS ON DATE. DETAILS OF MEAL. The meal will begin at TIME, and Sorensen's presentation will begin at TIME.

Sorensen writes "The Everyday Hunter," a three-time winner of "Best Newspaper Column" in Pennsylvania (from the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association). In 2015 he won the national "Pinnacle" award for outdoor writing. Sorensen's work appears in several newspapers, and he writes regularly for *Ohio Valley Outdoors* and his work has appeared in a variety of national magazines including *Deer & Deer Hunting*, *Sports Afield*, *Outdoor Life*, *North American Whitetail*, *Bear Hunters Online*, and others. Sorensen's columns and many of his magazine articles can be viewed at [www.EverydayHunter.com](http://www.EverydayHunter.com).

Sorensen's presentation is titled "The Path to Your Next Mature Whitetail" and draws on his work for *Deer & Deer Hunting* and *North American Whitetail* magazines. Sorensen tells how hunters are bringing home bruiser bucks that would be jaw-droppers anywhere. He'll give his audience the deer hunter's "geek" test, talk about how to find the biggest bucks in your area, why bucks get big, and how to take an inventory of the bucks where you hunt.

OTHER DETAILS REGARDING RESERVATIONS, TICKETS, DOOR PRIZES, CHURCH LOCATION, PHONE ETC., -- ADD OTHER INFORMATION AS NECESSARY.

Hunters and non-hunters will enjoy this event.



## **Follow-up—time to gather the harvest**

It's one thing for a person to receive Christ. It's another to become a devoted disciple. When you call on a person who has indicated he received Christ on the night of the dinner, what should you do? How do you follow up in a way that increases the chance you can fold this new believer into the church for discipling and fellowship? Here is where discipleship begins.

This may be the hardest task of all, but it's the most satisfying. It's like gathering the harvest into the barn. Each person is different, and may have a slightly different idea of what has happened. Remember that you have offered and they have accepted the greatest gift of all—forgiveness and new life in Christ.

### **Principles of Follow-up:**

The new believer, without another Christian to connect with, is likely to falter and end up falling away, or living way beneath full assurance as a believer, or remaining in spiritual infancy. A mature Christian will have a significant personal role in the early growth of a new Christian. Any person who follows up should have confidence that the Holy Spirit not only will make him effective, but is also working in the life of the new believer.

### **Eight simple principles to follow-up that will help build a committed disciple:**

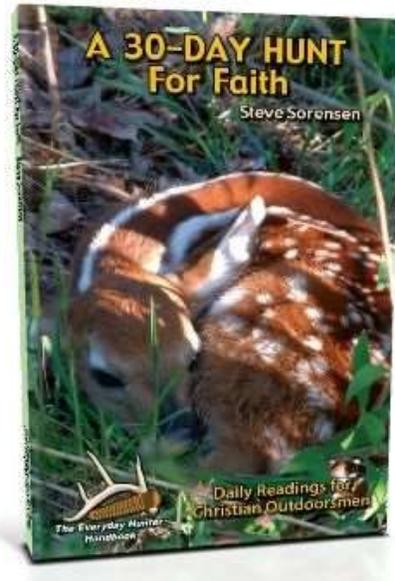
1. Pray for the one you will disciple (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3), because God is sovereign in the work of making disciples (Philippians 1:6; 2:13).
2. We have a responsibility to follow up new converts (1 Corinthians 3:5-9). We are God's instruments on earth—he chooses to work through people to accomplish His purpose.
3. The Word of God is essential to follow-up. (1 Thessalonians 2:13) We should teach from the Word of God, and avoid our own opinions and wisdom.
4. Recognize that God allows people to respond differently to His Word. Mark 4 teaches us that:
  - ...some do not accept the Word at all (v. 15).
  - ...some receive the Word superficially, but fall away and lose interest when problems come (vv.16, 17).
  - ...some hear and respond to the message, but later they allow it to be crowded out by things of the world (vv. 18, 19).
  - ...some hear, accept God's Word and bear fruit (v. 20).
5. Encourage him to make Christ the Lord of his life, not merely a new addition to his life.
6. Teach him that he has access to the Holy Spirit for power to live a new life.
7. Forming a strong personal friendship with the new believer is essential. Stress the importance of Christian fellowship in a local church. Offer to attend with him, or (if he's from a distance away) help him connect with a good church in his area.
8. Help him take steps to share his new-found faith, and to start by telling other believers.



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### When you call on each person, do not overstay your welcome. **BE BRIEF!**

- Thank him for attending the event. You may want to ask him how he heard about it.
- Make a statement or two about the event, and how your men enjoyed making it happen.
- Get him to talk about something that interests him—his work, family, etc.
- Mention that he checked “Received Christ as Savior” (or “Rededicated my life to Christ”), tell him you’ve done the same thing, and tell him that’s an important life-changing event.
- *Don't ask, “Do you have any questions.”* Do say, “Most men wonder what’s next.”
- Briefly reiterate the gospel, and say, “It’s like any new experience—we need to learn more about it.”
- This is a good time to give him the short devotional book (76 pages) written by Steve Sorensen especially for new believers who have come to faith at a Sportsman’s Dinner. It’s titled *A 30-Day Hunt for Faith*, and it’s available (with a quantity discount) at [www.EverydayHunter.com](http://www.EverydayHunter.com). It leads the reader through several basic Christian concepts and encourages him to move ahead when he completes it.
- Let him know you’ll be seeing him again, perhaps at a coming men’s event, or you’ll call on him again. At this point you may want to invite him to a men’s event, or try to connect him with another man in the church. (The word “relationship” is popular, but you might want to avoid it. To many men that sounds like something women are interested in, or it can make a man feel like something is being forced on him.)
- It’s always good to leave a gift behind. It could be a notepad with the church’s name on the pages, or a little booklet about the church, or the above mentioned devotional book. The point is that you’re trying to cultivate this person. You want to help him know he has an important connection with your church, and a vital connection with the Lord.



**Never wait long before making the contact. Within a week, every person who has made a profession of faith should be contacted, either by the pastor or a key leader.**

Not every person who professes Christ will end up becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus, and serve him through your church. Some will have connections with other churches. The idea of church will still feel strange to some. But Sportsman’s Dinners are a great way to introduce men to Christ and the church.

### Two **MUSTS** for follow-up.

1. **Train your follow-up team in one or two brief sessions outlining the teaching on these two pages**, or they may not be sure what to do. Role playing may be helpful.
2. **Approach follow-up with a broad kingdom mentality**, or you’ll end up being disappointed in the outcome. Remember, someone plants, someone waters, someone digs up weeds, but God gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).



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### **Two frequently asked questions:**

#### **How can we make sure everything goes smoothly?**

A lot can go wrong with a big event, and things can go downhill fast if people aren't served quickly and efficiently. People will notice if you aren't well-organized. People can be impatient when the door prizes drag on for an hour, or when you run out of drinks, or when you seem disorganized.

Figure out how much time each aspect of the event should take, and at what time each transition should happen. If you have used too much time in one thing, try to adjust on the next. It's important to keep things moving, but at a comfortable pace.

It might also help to visit other churches to see how they do it. Sportsman's Dinners are popular so one is likely to be close enough where you can send some key people to pick the brains of the organizers. Many churches have been doing it for as long as 20 years (which is a big clue to their effectiveness), and have their system well-established. They're rightly proud of the job they do and are willing to help others get started.

#### **Can Christians ethically hold an event that celebrates hunting?**

Sooner or later, you'll get that question in one form or another. Based on their own personal philosophies, some people will say it is immoral to kill animals and eat meat.

While it's not possible in this space to give a theological justification for hunting and eating meat, nothing in the Bible discourages either one. We can be thankful that our opposition is minimal in rural areas, but at the same time we should be prepared for some people to disapprove of what we do.

There is no correlation between "Thou shalt not kill" and hunting. Every commandment, including this one, is about the relationships between man and God or man and man. Many Bible verses are positive toward hunting, so it is abundantly clear that the commandment against killing is not a commandment against hunting. It is a command against the murder of another human being made in God's image, not a command against the killing of animals.

Would Jesus have hunted? No one can say he would not. Some people will say that hunting was not as important in the New Testament as it was in the Old, but clearly fishing (a close cousin to hunting) was highly valued. Many of Jesus' chosen disciples were fishermen. In fact, after Jesus' resurrection he told seven of them where to fish, and they brought 153 large fish to shore. This is not the action of a person who is against eating flesh, since Jesus himself was complicit in killing many fish – both at the beginning of his ministry (Luke 5) and the end (John 21). And more than once, he fed large crowds with fish. There is not a shred of evidence that Jesus was a "vegan." All the evidence points to the fact that he was a meat eater.

Hunting, fishing, even trapping animals to use their skins is never condemned in Scripture. In fact, Genesis 3:21 tells us God himself used animal skins to clothe Adam and Eve.



## **Bible Verses about Hunting**

The following verses are not meant to give full scriptural coverage of hunting, fishing, and eating meat, but they do show evidence that the Bible is positive toward hunting. In fact, the Bible gives no evidence at all that the Christian should oppose hunting, fishing or trapping.

One other use of these verses is to choose one to become a "theme verse" for your Sportsman's Dinner. (Verses below are from the New King James Version.)

### **God gave man "dominion" (this includes conservation and game management) over the animals he created:**

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (**Genesis 1:26**).

### **God has designed into creation a food chain, with mankind at the top:**

And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so (**Genesis 1:29-30**).

### **After the flood God gave us both plants and animals for food:**

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs (**Genesis 9:3**).

### **Hunting was respected in the Old Testament and good hunters were admired:**

He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord" (**Genesis 10:9**).

### **God approved of hunting, or he would not guide a man to become an archer.**

So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer (**Genesis 21:20**).

### **Isaac, the son of Abraham and the father of Isaac, appreciated hunting and eating game:**

Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die" (**Genesis 27:3-4**).

### **God told the Israelites to eat meat:**

Speak to the people of Israel, saying, These are the living things that you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth (**Leviticus 11:2**).



## *Steve Sorensen's Ultimate Guide to Planning a Sportsman's Dinner*

**Hunting and fishing were moral activities God himself endorsed:**

“Behold, I will send for many fishermen,” says the Lord, “and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks” (**Jeremiah 16:16**).

**Peter, in the New Testament, was told by God that killing and eating meat was permitted:**  
And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat” (**Acts 10:13**).

**St. Paul endorsed eating the flesh of animals with thanksgiving:**

For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer (**1 Timothy 4:4-5**).

***Is there a better way to reach men in your community  
than by holding a Sportsman's Dinner?***



Plans are made, the event has been publicized, tickets have been sold, food is ready and prizes are on display. You've thought of everything, done everything, and a great crowd is ready for a great time. They'll all hear the gospel and some of them will meet Jesus for the first time!



## *Steve Sorensen's Ultimate Guide to Planning a Sportsman's Dinner*

### **A Personal Word:**

As I travel around speaking at men's events, I never fail to be impressed with three things:



No program in any church creates the enthusiasm I've seen men put into planning and carrying out a Sportsman's Dinner.



No program beats the pure enjoyment guests get from celebrating the greatness of our Creator.



No other strategy for ministering to men creates more openness or responsiveness to hearing the gospel.

I believe strongly in the effectiveness of Sportsman's Dinners at presenting the gospel to people and I invite you to use this material and make as many copies as you need without charge, whether you call me as your speaker or not. I put together *Steve Sorensen's Ultimate Guide to Planning a Sportsman's Dinner* for three reasons:

1. ... so that the churches and organizations that have never held a Sportsman's Dinner can do it without "reinventing the wheel,"
2. ... so that those who want to expand or enlarge their event can have some proven ideas on how to do that,
3. ... and so that those who hold a Sportsman's Dinner can maximize its effectiveness in reaching people for Christ. That is my prayer.

**Contact me for a copy of my personal tract and a brochure describing the sportsman's dinner programs I have available.**

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