



POWER LUNCH

Volume II – Issue 5

The Power Lunch Newsletter An Exousia Ministry

May 2004

NO MORE EXCUSES



For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word; but as MEN of sincerity, as commissioned by God in the sight of God we speak in Christ. II Corinthians 2:17 (RSV)

Rev. Matthew L. Watley
Power Lunch Founder

This article was written several years ago for an online magazine for men of color, and has been reprinted here.

It is evident from the disproportionate ratio of women to men that can be found in virtually every black church in America that brothers have serious issues with God, or at least with the institution that purports to represent God—the church. These are the traditional reasons black men give for not going to church. I have offered counter arguments as an effort to jumpstart our thinking about what it means to really be committed to building a stronger relationship with God by regularly attending His house.

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POWER LUNCH CELEBRATES THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MEN

The POWER of Power Lunch By Catrisha Sawyer

*"They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power"
Psalms 145:11*

A family member and co-worker invited me to attend Power Lunch a little over a year ago. The Spirit of the Lord was definitely in the place as I watched a large and diverse group of people worship God as Rev. Watley delivered his powerful message. From that day, I knew that Power Lunch would play a vital role in my spiritual growth.



At first, I was a little apprehensive about attending Power Lunch on a weekly basis. I was comfortable with my normal lunch hour activities and content with just going to Power Lunch whenever I felt I needed a word. However, each Power Lunch service added such a blessing to my day and week that before I knew it, I was at Power Lunch every week waiting to see and hear how God would use this anointed man of God to minister to his people. I even started helping after the worship service and it wasn't long before I was part of the leadership team.

Since then, Power Lunch has helped me in many different facets of my life. This ministry has empowered me to be a better witness to nonbelievers at my workplace. Now when my co-workers see me packing up around 11:30 a.m. on Wednesdays, they know that I'm headed out to Power Lunch and when I get back I'll be smiling and eager to give them a word or two.

The POWER of Power Lunch is truly amazing. Every week God uses Rev. Watley to speak to any and every problem or issue that I may be facing. I always leave knowing that no matter what I'm going through, God has it all in control! I can honestly and truly say that deciding to make Power Lunch a part of my spiritual growth was one of the best decisions that I have ever made.

Catrisha Sawyer ministers as a Power Lunch Leadership Team member.

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A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

In our society, it is difficult to discuss gender roles without offending our postmodern sensibilities. Yet for believers, we understand that we don't determine our function in life, but our position description in the word of God. God calls men to have a heart for Him. Power Lunch is committed to helping men fulfill the various roles they are called to fulfill as worshipers, servants, chief priests, prayer warriors, and disciples. A man without God is a man without purpose. Power Lunch has been blessed to have a large number of men serve and attend each week as part of their service unto God.



May is Men's Month!

Power Lunch strives to reach out to men that love God and want more of Him in their lives. We seek to reach men that know the seriousness of a relationship with God and that desire to grow in Him. Power Lunch Men know that there is more to life than making a living, providing for their families, and sports. **That is why on May 26, 2004 Power Lunch is celebrating Men's Day!** Join us and see how God is working in the lives of the men!

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REASON #1: PREACHERS INTIMIDATE BLACK MEN

Response: Dr. Joseph S. Ratliff notes, "Historically, the preacher was the one or one of the few that could read or had attained some modicum of financial stability in our community. This usually resulted from him exercising some entrepreneurial prowess or professional skills—funeral home owner, or school principal." This is no longer the case. Black preachers no longer hold the title of most educated and certainly not most prosperous. Thanks to scholarships, HBCUs, stock options, third generation businesses, a handful of sports contracts and record deals, and the like, more than a few brothers are sitting pretty enough to laugh at the preacher. If brothers are intimidated, it is not because of any quantifiable disparity between them and the pulpit. That gap has been closed.

REASON #2: CHURCHES ARE LIKE HEN HOUSES, ONLY ONE ROOSTER ALLOWED

Response: Regrettably, many preachers help to foster this stereotype by engaging in illicit affairs with female congregants. As James Baldwin states in *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, "Being a preacher ain't never stopped a man from doing his dirt." Marcia Dyson gives a very frank

discussion of this phenomenon in an *Essence Magazine* article entitled "When Preachers Prey." One point she makes is that many times the sisters in the church are not victims, but predators. That said, while some clergy still fall into traps, these exceptions do not warrant boycotts by brothers from the First Greater Missionary Baptist AMEZ Churches of God in Christ anymore than the disproportionate rate of black male incarceration justifies racial profiling.

REASON #3: CHURCH PLAYS UPON THE EMOTIONS OF PEOPLE, AND SINCE MEN BELIEVE THEMSELVES TO BE NON-EMOTIVE, THEY DON'T GO TO CHURCH

Response: The characteristic crying, dancing, and other expressive acts that typify the black worship experience are anathema to strong men that view these contortions as unintelligent and emasculating. Hidden inside this reasoning are sexual identity issues. After all, if brothers wash clothes, take care of children, and throw down in the kitchen (though we won't admit it around our boys), all of which are traditionally considered female undertakings, why draw the line at black worship style? Moreover, there are plenty of brothers that believe in "getting down" in worship. Over the last 10 to 15 years, charismatic churches of all races, and

ministries like Power Lunch have sprung up all over the nation. These churches have plenty of brothers shouting, dancing, clapping, and swaying with the beat and the Spirit right next to sisters. The tragedy is that these churches are the exception. If you feel that you can't participate in such things, you may have some unresolved gender issues.

REASON #4: PREACHERS ARE JUST TRYING TO GET MONEY

Response: This is a favorite, and it is linked to the allusion of personal wealth we associate with the preacher. We see his car, clothes, rings, and ask, "Why should I pay this guy so he can go back to the mall?" In truth, many preachers having nothing more than the clothes on their backs and the cars in the driveways of the parsonages they don't even own. Right now, churches all over the nation are grappling with how to support the dutiful pastor in a church where I'm certain that none of the things are earth shattering. So why repeat them? Because the bottom line is that the worst thing in the world is a man with excuses. Excuses about why he can't get a job, why he can't take care of the small village he's fathered, and why he sits at home and criticizes the church. In any case, I just can't stand excuses. Come on brothers. It's time to go to church!

ANNOUNCEMENTS



MINISTRY UPDATE – Power Lunch Baltimore

Shout, for the Lord has given us the city! We have met our financial goal for Power Lunch Baltimore, and we are moving forward.