

SHOULD FRATERNITIES BE BANNED?

Fraternities: To be are not to be?

Greek life: To be are not to be?

Fraternities: Is the call for reform the real issue?

After 31 years of ministering in fraternities, I think I have seen and heard about everything you can think of. I was very involved in my fraternity all four years in college. I lived in the house for two years. I attended every party and chapter meeting and ate most meals there as well. I even earned the nick name "Active Ike". But my involvement did not stop with graduation. I decided to go into full time ministry primarily to minister to fraternities and at the end of this spring I will have been doing it for 28 years. For most men who go into ministry, their field is the church; my field is ministering to fraternity men.

I have eaten 2,000+ times in frat houses. I know what fraternity men think about. I know what their tendencies are good and bad. I feel like I understand them as much as anyone. I see all the good they do along with the bad. I also see the rise of pressure from the outside media and national fraternity offices calling for more restrictions and policies.

So to be are not to be? Isn't that really the question people are asking?

Even though fraternities have been around as early as the year after the US declared its independence from England, even with all the negative publicity, fraternities are actually growing. In his article entitled "Get the Keg out of the frat" John Hechinger states, "fraternities are more popular than ever. Undergraduate membership in the North-American Interfraternity Conference, which represents most of the oldest and largest fraternities, has soared by 50 percent over the last decade. As many as one in six men who attends a four-year college full time belongs to a fraternity. This year, (2017) more than 100,000 young men will pledge."

There is a pattern that I have seen over and over in my experience in ministering fraternities that I don't think will ever go away no matter how much reform we call for. I have seen fraternities raise as much as \$150,000 a year for their philanthropies, I have seen them do the biggest blood drives in the state and get as many as 1,100 pints of blood in one drive (which can save as many as 3,300 lives), and yet these entire organizations are put on some sort of probation and even suspended because of the actions of very few and in some cases because of the actions of one.

I know this sounds easy, get rid of the one or the few that cause the problems but something much more radical needs to take place. We can take away their parties and try to better educate them on how to respect women but that will not change the heart. We don't need more restrictions and policies from the outside, what we need is men around the nation going inside these fraternities and ministering to these men. In Matthew 11:19, Jesus was called a glutton and drunkard by his critics not because he excelled in those activities but because he excelled in going to the lost and ministering directly to them and with them.

I believe fraternities (and sororities) are the most accessible and strategic group on campus. I guesstimate that I have eaten lunch in fraternity houses over 2,000 times and yet I have only seen a pastor one time. I understand that they are over worked most of the time just ministering to their own congregations but my point is that we need more men going to these chapters, and ministering to these men. My prayer is that the Lord will raise up hundreds if not thousands of men who will not be afraid to walk into a frat and tell them about the greatest need they have and that is to surrender their lives to some one who can save not their frats but their lives. And that man is Christ. In John

10:10b, Jesus says, "I came that they might have life and have it abundantly". Threw a knowledge of Him they too can have the abundant life.

"And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. " Ezekiel 11:19-20