



A PASTOR'S GUIDE TO HELP SINGLES THRIVE

PRACTICAL TIPS AND ADVICE FOR SUPPORTING
AND EMPOWERING SINGLES IN YOUR
CONGREGATION



INTRODUCTION

SINGLENES CAN COME WITH MANY DIFFERENT CHALLENGES AND STRUGGLES. WHETHER WIDOWED, DIVORCED, OR SINGLE THEIR WHOLE LIVES, A SINGLE CAN BE EXPERIENCING MANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Feeling like they have done something wrong to be single
- Wishing they could just be happy like everyone else
- Asking, “If God loves me, why is He letting this be the reality of my life?”
- Wondering if they will ever get married and have kids
- Feeling tired of being the third wheel
- Growing sick of spending free time alone
- Wishing they had a significant other to share news with, help with problems, and truly understand them
- Harboring jealousy of friends’ relationships
- Waiting for life to begin at marriage
- Fearing being single for the rest of their life

SO HOW CAN WE HELP?



MINDSET

1

EMPATHIZE

Singles want to be seen, understood, and acknowledged (just like everyone else).

2

MARRIAGE IS NOT SUPERIOR TO SINGLENESS

In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul says it is good for people to not marry. God does not say marriage is better than singleness so we should treat both relationship statuses as equally good.

3

WE DON'T KNOW GOD'S SPECIFIC PLANS

God may want someone to be single right now as part of His bigger plans. Our own preference should not conflict what God may be doing in someone's life.

4

WANT VERSUS NEED

Singles want versus need may be misaligned. Many singles think they need a spouse to be happy, but really they only need God. Christian community and support is a great reminder of this fact.

IDENTITY

Helping singles understand their identity can completely change how they view their life as a single.

If a person's identity is "single", they may view themselves as

- unloved
- alone
- unchosen
- rejected
- hopeless

If a single's identity is "loved by God" that means they are:

- Loved (John 3:16)
- Never Alone (Matthew 28:20)
- Hopeful (Ephesians 2:10)
- God wants to be with them forever (John 17:24)



WAITING

As a single it is easy to get frustrated in the waiting of singleness, wondering, "Why does God have me here?" God often lets us sit in waiting room because He has bigger plans for His kingdom. Read the following for examples and think about what God did in someone's waiting:

- Lazarus (John 11)
- Jairus' Daughter (Mark 5:21-33)
- Demon-possessed man (Mark 5: 1-20)
- Paralytic (John 5)
- Widow (Luke 7:11-17)
- Blind Man (John 9)

The image features three dried, golden-brown reeds or grasses against a light beige background. The reeds are positioned diagonally, with the central one being the most prominent and in focus. The other two are slightly out of focus, one to the left and one to the right. The text is centered over the lower half of the image.

PRACTICAL TIPS TO
ENCOURAGE
SINGLES

FOR EVERYONE

- 1 Don't ask about their dating life (unless they say it's ok)
- 2 Don't set them up (unless they ask)
- 3 Don't act like single life is easier than non-single life
- 4 Don't give bad single advice
- 5 Care about where singles are in their lives (talk about their hopes and dreams)
- 6 Invite them
- 7 Pray for them
- 8 Celebrate them (and with them)
- 9 See if they need help
- 10 Pick them up
- 11 Hug them (optional)

FOR PASTORS

- 1 Invite a single (or singles) at your church to coffee, drinks, or a meal and ask them about their experiences/how the church can help
- 2 Do not avoid hard topics (Don't condemn without practical solutions)

FOR CHURCH SERVICES

- 1** When you have sermons on marriage, talk about singleness too (or provide a supplemental bible study)

- 2** Include mentions/applications of singleness when possible

- 3** Pray for singles (like we pray for anniversaries)

FOR THE CHURCH

- 1** Match singles with volunteer positions based on their talents and abilities

- 2** Make church events friendly for singles

- 3** Include periodic events or bible studies for singles (partner with other WELS churches)

- 4** Have families for singles on holidays

- 5** Pair up singles across generations (single mentoring)

- 6** Include single women as appropriate in church business (or just ask for their input)

- 7** For single women, consider including another woman in at-home visits

- 8** If there is a school, consider how singles can be involved

- 9** Offer training on healthy relationships

SMALL GROUPS

A fantastic way to be able to support singles is through small groups. This gives singles a community to regularly plug into that can encourage and support them. Here are four different types of groups to consider for singles:

1) Singles Group

Singles groups are a great way for singles to meet and talk about common challenges and successes. However, if a single group turns into a matching making group it can easily derail.

2) Special Interest Groups

Sexual integrity groups, divorced groups, widow group, single parent, or other special interest groups, are great ways for people to encourage each other in common struggles.

3) Age-Range Group

Age-Range group allow for people of similar ages to support one another even if they are at different places in their lives.

4) Non-demographic Group

Non-demographic groups allow everyone to join and don't put people in categories that they might not like (single). Wisdom and perspective can be shared across generations and relationship statuses.






THANKS FOR READING!

I'm Hannah Schermerhorn. I am the author of *A Single Life to Live*. I wrote the book to help singles love their lives by understanding God's goodness and plan in singleness.

If you want more information on singleness including how to encourage singles check out:

www.HannahSchermerhorn.com

 @onlyasinglelife

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♥ *Hannah*

