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**Singleness**

## **A Commission To Singles In The Church**



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# A Commission To Singles In The Church

*“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Eph. 4.16*

In a conflicted society with many viewpoints regarding singleness, it is important for our denomination to be a welcoming, safe place where singles can integrate into the fabric of their church community. While the church has some ownership in making this a reality, singles’ attitudes and choices also play a vital role. The following are some questions for singles to consider, as the answers can influence the way an individual interacts within their church body.

1. **In what ways do I support my church?** It is easy for any of us to fall into the trap of entitlement, believing the local church should be serving us. However, the truth is we will gain as much as we invest. It can be easy to view church as a Sunday or Wednesday night event when in reality, church support should be occurring every day of the week. For example, do you prioritize connecting with fellow members at times throughout the week—perhaps meeting for coffee or a Bible study? If distance or work schedule make it difficult to connect, have you considered making a phone call or sending an encouraging card to someone? Another powerful way to support the church is through prayer. It would be powerful to pray for a few names in your church directory each day. There are many ways to support your church, and it is key to ask yourself if your weekly choices are strengthening your connection to the local body or reinforcing isolation.
2. **Do I have a mission?** For some individuals this may mean a specific role in their local congregation, such as serving as a Sunday school teacher or song leader. Others may find purpose and meaning through less formal roles, such as singing at a local nursing home or mentoring siblings or cousins. Still for other individuals, God may have laid on their heart to participate in a local community ministry, such as volunteering at the local food bank or serving as a 4-H leader. God has gifted everyone in some way (*I Cor. 12:7*). Make sure you are using whatever gift or passion the Lord has placed on your heart. Take ownership in these opportunities and make a commitment to serve diligently, not just when it seems convenient.
3. **Will I be patient in the midst of disappointment?** We live in a broken world, and as such, our lives will inevitably hold frustrations. For the singles that desire to be married, it can be easy to place the blame for your singleness at the foot of the church’s marriage process. If you desire a church office, it can be easy to believe that due to your marital status, you may never be able to serve in that capacity. While there may be grains of truth in each of these scenarios, the single should also consider what they *can do* in specific situations. If you have genuine desires, prayerfully talk with your elder. Also earnestly pray God would reveal to you any areas of growth that are needed for sanctification in your own life. God wants to redeem each disappointment and frustration we feel so it is important to turn these over to Him instead of allowing Satan to turn these hurts into bitterness.
4. **Do I hold my church to unrealistic standards?** No church is perfect. It is not wrong for a single to desire to be accepted and treated as an equal in their congregation. The reality is however that most churches (within and without our denomination) will always operate from a marriage and family lens, as the majority of leadership and congregants will be in this stage of life. As such, singles need to recognize that the tension they feel as a minority may always exist. Singles can choose to let this tension become a frustration to them, or choose to live well in their current status (*I Cor. 7:24*). Each individual is accountable for the feelings of discontentment, bitterness, or at times superiority they feel towards their brothers and sisters in Christ. As members one to another (*Rom. 12:5*), let us strive to not let things such as marital status create division or isolation within our church.

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5. **Do I let insecurities keep me from receiving a blessing?** Sometimes a person's well-hidden insecurities emerge to the surface and seem to be highlighted by their singleness. Perhaps an individual feels insecure about their appearance, age, or personality. Due to these insecurities, they may find themselves withdrawing from fellowship, leaving room for Satan's attack. Consider this: travel and fellowship are an unique opportunity in our church tradition and the strength of community is strong. As a single, do you take advantage of these opportunities or use the excuse that you are too old or introverted for such activities? Without a doubt, social invitations get more difficult to accept once an individual enters the workforce. There are limited hours in the day to complete one's workload and daily tasks. Singles must ensure they are making wise choices with time-management and not neglecting their legitimate, individual needs. Yet singles should also be sure they are not turning down opportunities due to selfishness or insecurities.
6. **How do I view God?** Singles have a unique opportunity to serve God whole-heartedly without the distractions of a spouse or family (*1 Cor. 7:32-35*). Do you embrace this for the gift it is? It can be easy to develop discontentment or distrust with God if things in your life have not gone as expected. Over time, this can create a substantial barrier in your relationship with the Lord. Be careful this does not become your new normal, as believers often attempt to fill in spiritual gaps with unhealthy relationships or behaviors. As believers, our sufficiency is found in Christ (*2 Cor. 12:9*). For a single, this sufficiency will sustain you as you take time to invest in your relationship with Christ.
7. **Do I believe my worth is found in my marital status?** When it feels like others believe marriage is a sign of maturity, it can be difficult to not fall into the trap of believing it yourself. God views singles and married equally. While it is not wrong to desire marriage, the goal of marriage and family can become an idol if we are not careful. Guard against this "tunnel-vision for the future," and build relationships with friends and fellow believers now. Also, remember even if you never marry, your worth rests in Christ and that will never change. We are complete in Him and Him alone (*Col. 2:10*).

How we view ourselves can greatly influence the way we interact with others. The church needs singles who are confident in their God-given identity and who are willing to serve as a powerful testimony of Christ's sufficiency to others. Singles at different life stages who are living lives with purpose and meaning and actively making investments within their local congregations provide a great example of the Gospel. Do not let discouragement or insecurity keep you from embracing the unique opportunities God has gifted to you through singleness. Your labor and faithfulness is never in vain for the Lord.