



Not every church is called to have a singles ministry but all churches are called to minister to single adults. Ministry doesn't always mean a huge group, with a big leadership team, with tons of activities and bible studies. It could be something as simple as a divorce recovery ministry, small group, or mission events. It is going to come down to the who, what, when, where and why questions. So do your homework, read what you need and start praying about what God is telling you to do. Don't get ahead of God.

One of my favorite parts of the bible is the story of Nehemiah and how he waited 6 months before God gave him the OK to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. God gives us specific direction on how to pray, start, plan, deal with the enemy and produce. Read Nehemiah before you start.

So you want to start a singles ministry and your are not sure of where to start?

BEFORE YOU START:

Download the free 6-page guide on how to start a singles ministry as well as listen to the free mp3 located under tools then basics on TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries website. This will give you the basics on what you will need to start your ministry as well as maintain it. You may also opt to download some of the other articles as well as the mp3's.

NEXT:

So you have read the free handout, you have an idea of who will be on your team, you have even started praying for the direction, now what?

1. Spend some time praying with your team on the direction, focus on your ministry.

Questions to answer:

- What are you goals?
- What is your vision?
- Who are you trying to reach?
- What ministries already exist at the church that is meeting the needs of the singles?
- What is the church doing right/wrong?
- How will your singles ministry add to the overall growth of the church?
- Are there other churches in your area doing successful singles ministry? Have you made contact with them?
- What are the demographics of the single adults in your area/town/5 mile radius?
- What are the demographics of your church membership?
- Do you know anyone who has led singles ministry before at your church? (Learn the history)

2. Develop a plan of action.

- Talk to your pastor/staff about starting the singles ministry.
- Prepare: Spend the time putting together a packet of information for your pastor so that they know you are serious about this ministry. Put the information listed above such as your vision, goals, demographics, etc. including who is on your team, how long you have been meeting and praying. Also include any research such as the material you have gotten off of TheSinglesNetwork.org and other sites/books. Also include a list of things you are wanting from the church such as a budget, a place to meet, promotion of your ministry (web space, advertisement), etc. Please remember, most pastor's are very busy. The more information you can present and leave with him, the higher chance you will have his support.
- Set up an appointment, value your time with him.

- Bring the key people on your team to the meeting. (Note: Your team needs to reflect your audience you want to reach. Only women reach women.)
- Stay focused and precise in presenting the information to the pastor. Allow time for questions on both sides. Leave the materials with the pastor and ask for when you can expect to hear back.

Note: Never, never ask your a pastor about starting a singles ministry on a Sunday morning or other time when he is in the middle of teaching or preparing to teach. Set up an appointment so that you have his full attention.

3. Depending on your pastor's answer will affect the next step. He made have more questions, may need to present your information to the deacons/elders, may prefer a different leader to run it such as a pastor, etc. Most churches that do not have a singles ministry are fearful of them for one reason or another (see my article on "Why My Church Does Not Have a Singles Ministry" under articles on TheSinglesNetwork.org site.). So part of your time, presenting to your pastor will be teaching, training, educating, etc. on what a single adult is, how to reach them, why to reach them, what we are and what we are not, etc.

MY CHURCH SAID YES, BUT WILL NOT OFFER ANY SUPPORT SUCH AS A PASTOR, FUNDS, or a ROOM.

If your church will allow you to start a singles ministry but not offer the support you are wanting, you can develop this support over time. Sometimes we need to prove to our churches the value of having a singles ministry. We have to show them why it's needed, why it's important, how it adds to the church, etc. Just continue to pray for those doors to open for the support you are wanting. Be sure that your ministry is viewed as a positive addition to the church versus a negative one. Be careful to vent about any problems to your team (or someone outside your church), when applicable. We know there will be problems as in all ministry. It's not if we have them but how we handle them.

SO I PRESENTED EVERYTHING AND I WAS TURNED DOWN, NOW WHAT?

Ask questions about why you were turned down and be prepared to make adjustments. Ask the pastor what you need to do to be allowed to start a singles ministry. If you are a woman, and do not have a male-co leader, some churches will not support your leadership. So ahead of time, put this in place. Statistically we know that male/female leadership will grow the same while women only leaders grows only women.

Remember: You are called to submit to the authority of your church. If your church turns you down, you must submit to their authority. However, if you still feel called to start a singles ministry, you can:

- Conduct a one-on-one Bible studies with a single adult in your home.
- Join an existing singles ministry in your community (but stay at your home church).
- Start a para-ministry/ singles ministry in your community. (see an article on how to do this on the website).

The only other option would be to leave your church and join a church that is open to starting a singles ministry or already has one. Please know, The Singles Network Ministry was started as a para-ministry. This allowed continued support and serving at a local church but also meet the needs of singles in the community.

For more information on developing your single adult ministry as well as articles, websites and books of interest, go to www.TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries.

To reach Kris Swiatocho for speaking engagements, call 919.434.3611 or Kris@thesinglesnetwork.org