Leadership 101: Finding and Developing Leaders for your Single Adult Ministry

By Kris Swiatocho

**Note: If you haven’t downloaded the “How to Start a Singles Ministry” please do so at www.TheSinglesNetwork.org as it’s a preview to the following information. I also encourage you to download many of the other free resources on this site as well as watch the videos. You may also opt to purchase the FAQ Book on Singles Ministry and the Leadership Curriculum.**

*As long as I remember, building leadership has been one of the most difficult things to do. Whether is singles or marrieds, young or old, it’s an area of ministry that changes. You can have a great team that is working well together and in an instant, singles announce their upcoming marriage, their jobs change, a family member get sick and so forth. So it’s critical to constantly be looking for that next person(s) to lead.*

*For me and my own personal ministry, we get people involved quickly, sometimes the first time we meet them. We ask them to help clean up as a way to see their interest. We know that as quick as we get them connected, the quicker they stay connected. From that simple job of serving, you can help develop your next leader.*

*Blessings in building a ministry to not only change your life but the lives of many others.*

*—Kris Swiatocho*

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**First, leadership IS about:**

*A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. —John Maxwell*

**1. Setting Boundaries:** They know what he/she can do; they learn their limits and how to say no. Please realize that setting healthy boundaries in all areas of your life is hard. Finding that fine line in helping to grow others and also having time for yourself is critical. But a leader who knows when to say yes and no is a leader who will help you build a great ministry.

**2. Being Self-Responsible:** They desire personal development; self-care and self-nurture.

So many leaders often try to do everything themselves. They get tired of waiting on others to help so instead of waiting on God to grow their ministries, waiting on God to bring more

to help, leaning to delegate and ask for help, they end up wearing themselves out. A

healthy leader will not only take care of themselves but also seek to learn, read books on leadership, allow themselves to be mentored, etc. They desire to grow Spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally.

**3. Being Relational:** They build people, not just start a program; they create an environment of nurture where others are empowered; they avoid hierarchical or autocratic leadership, because the ministry is owned by people. Often leaders can become control freaks. Ministry has to be about people. This is where your grace button has to be used a lot. You have to allow others to lead and grow the way God has designed them. It’s through our relationships that we reach others for Christ.

**4. Empowering Others:** They give others power, responsibility, and ownership for dreams, ideas, tasks, and input. Giving people the ability and power to lead or make choices. Permitting and enabling them to take responsibility. One of the things that is so hard to do is let someone else have an idea and run with it. What if it doesn't work? What if people think it was my bad idea? What if they don’t do it right? What if…? Well, what if it does go right, different, new, etc.? What if God is raising up a new leader that will either take your place so you can go to the next place. What if God is using you to lead someone so they can go and lead elsewhere. Healthy leaders desire to empower others to lead. Sometimes it requires others to fail too.

*Terry Hershey and Rich Hurst, writers and co-authors of Giving Your Ministry Away believe leadership is not a power pyramid but a relational pyramid. Relational leadership is self-responsibility in place of authority. It is creating an environment for empowering others. Relational leadership is giving responsibility away, or giving the ministry away...it’s not about who has the most power but who can give the most power away?*

**Why Do Leaders Fail:**

**• Ego:** It’s all about them; major pride issues; can’t admit they are wrong

**• Insensitivity to people:** Maybe they have been leading so long they have forgotten why they do it. They have lost their passion.

**• Inability to delegate:** They either don’t know how to do this or afraid the person they give it too will fail. The reality is some will fail and some will succeed. This is where being a leader is critical. You have to mentor/disciple them in such a way to help them learn but also allowing them to make mistakes. You need to delegate smaller pieces at a time.

**• Hurting leader who don’t ask for help:** Leaders have family and personal problems too. Often a leader feels they have to be the strong one, to set an example. Sometimes the greatest example is one who says they are hurting and need help too. My only caution is what kind of help are you needing…what is your struggle. If you are struggling with a drug, sex, gambling type issue, you may need to step down as a leader/pastor. However, if it’s a struggle with a family member, work, depression, etc. allowing your singles to know you need prayer and some help while you work on things is great.

**• Critical of others:** If you find yourself or others to constantly be negative. This will break down relationships.

**• No vision for the future:** They are simply working to work without any clear direction from God. They have always led so they will always lead. These type of leaders will lead you no where. It may be time to take a step back and re-evaluate where God is leading.

**• Arrogance, cool personality:** This leader has some major pride issues but also a sense of entitlement. Again, like a large ego it will only hurt the ministry.

**• Lack of training others:** This has to be one of the biggest reasons why singles ministry fails. Maybe you yourself have not been properly train or know how to train others. This is when you need to a class, get mentored by someone, read a John Maxwell book, read the book of Nehemiah, etc. If you are not constantly speaking truth, leading others, giving the ministry away with your knowledge of how to lead, etc. then your ministry will not grow. People will not know how to multiply themselves.

**• Allow unhealthy singles to dominate their ministry:** In all ministry, there are going to be unhealthy people. Jesus says the poor will always be with us. You can’t allow unhealthy, unwilling to grow or change singles to dominate your ministry. If you don’t

continue to grow singles to be healthy adults, then the unhealthy will take over. Eventually your ministry will stagnate and not grow.

**• Not teachable:** Being teachable has to start with you, as a leader. If you can’t see your own failures, your own mistakes and admit them, then how can you lead others.

**• Apathetic:** You can’t allow failure, boredom, lack of church and other staff support to overwhelm you or push you to give up/not care.

**• Not available:** If singles have become a part/part time job then it’s probably not your job or calling anymore. Too many leaders want to help lead but they are simply too involved in others things. It’s doesn’t mean they couldn’t help; they are just not available.

**• Lazy:** Well this speaks for itself. Often I find leaders who simply want the glory of the title but do nothing. Yes, delegating is important but leading by example is also important.

**• Burn-out:** You can’t wait till you get burn out. You have to know the symptoms before you get to this point. Having accountability in your life, a great personal quite time, boundaries, taking breaks, delegating, etc..can help keep this from happening.

Note: Remember to save your emails, personal notes you get from singles in relation to what you are doing right. So whenever you get discourage, you can read them to remind you that you doing what God has called you to do.

**• Lack of experience:** So often leaders have never truly led. They have not had anyone to mentor them so they don’t know what to do. This goes back to asking for help. Ask your pastor, other leader in a different ministry to help you. Pray for others to come along side to help.

**OK, so now you know what makes up a good leader and where leaders often fail. Perhaps you have been called to lead your singles ministry. So what is next?**

**BUILDING: THE TEAM**

*He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be*

*evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:10-13*

**Who should be on my team?**

**• Faithful/maturing single adults who know who they are in Christ.** Your leaders need to be folks who are consistent in their church attendances, Sunday school or small group. You see their desire to grow in the Lord.

**• Available single adults.** If they are already serving in other areas of the church, that is where they need to be. Wishing they could help and then failing due to over commitment is not going to grow your ministry. If they truly feel called to be on your team, then they may need to step down from another ministry or commitment.

**• Teachable single adults.** What kind of attitude do they have? How do they handle conflict? How do they handle criticism?

**• Likes to invest in others, serve others.** If you find leaders who may have all the above characteristics but lack the heart to serve, you have a problem. Every lead needs to serve.

**• Those who have passion/vision.** If your leadership aren’t passionate about the ministry. If they are not helping to communicate the vision and direction, then they are hurting the ministry.

**• People in a variety of life’s stages and ones with various backgrounds.** This comes down to whom you are trying to reach. If your team only has divorced women over 55, then that is what you will reach.

**Unity is critical:**

When I come into a new situation where I need to develop a team, I seem to get all kinds of single adults. Some that are available and some that are mature and some that will do anything for me. Not everyone you work with may have all the qualities you are looking for. Some single adult’s may need training and guidance. However, if your team has members that seem never to be available, still falling into sin such as sexual immorality, never seem to be wrong or apologetic, then your team will not be a team. I am not saying that people need to be perfect, but there needs to be a mindset of togetherness towards the same goal as well as a time to acknowledge the gifts they have and ways these can be used toward that goal.

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Psalm 133*

***Remember, as their leader, you do not recruit people to fill your dreams but rather invest in individuals to whom God has given dreams of their own.***

**How do I find my team members\*?**

**START BY:**

**• Creating a survey** to give out at your church to single adults (or to your actual single adult ministry). You can also use an app such as survey monkey. There are a few samples on my website at www.TheSinglesNetwork.org. Then look under resources/tools.

**• Go through your church database** to find who your single adults are; start to qualify/identify them. Who would make a great leader or volunteer? Then contact them.

**• Ask other members of your church/single adult ministry** who they know that meets the qualities of the team member you are looking for. Consider using married adults who have a heart for singles (whether temporary or long-term.)

**• Make an announcement** or send out an email/facebook message.

**• Pray about existing people** that may already be involved in a single Sunday school class or Bible study that have the type of qualities you are looking for.

**• If you already have the core team,** then split up responsibilities and make it everyone’s job to find their own team.

Note: It’s important that as you serve in any part of ministry that you continuously look to build new leaders. New leaders that may take your place or form a new team, ministry or small group.

\*This will depend on what kind of team and your overall goals.

**THEN:**

**• Set up a time** to meet with each person to get to know them and to share your vision. Pray with them. Keep it simple and short.

**• Ask them to pray** about their involvement, their ideas and input (and their vision).

**• Be sure to give them a job description** that includes what is expected of them. Be sure to go through the description with them so they can understand.

Note: You can break-up job responsibilities up among more than one leader. Just make sure everyone knows their area. You can purchase a job list description on my website.

**• Ask for short commitments.**

**• Pray about each person** on your own and then with a staff person or co-leaders.

**• Set up a time to follow-up** with each person to discuss his or her involvement.

**NEXT:**

*Develop a relationship with your team members. What is critical here is that you develop a relationship with your team (or small group) so that as God pours into you, you are able to pour into them.*

• This is your team.

• These individuals will be running the ministry.

• This team will learn from your guidance and direction as God leads you.

• It’s important to become friends with them. Write them, call them, follow along with them on facebook, pray for them, spend time with them, and love them. Then hopefully they will model this behavior with their team.

• Create a contract: Some churches will ask you to fill out a contract of your commitment to the ministry as a way of making sure you have prayed about your decision. Sample contracts are on the website.

*Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. 2 Thes 4:11*

**Working together as a team.**

**• Communication is important.**

-They need to know their job\* and what is expected of them.

-They need to have access to you and each other.

-They need to be given information from meetings/events (that they have missed).

**• Discipleship is critical.**

-Not only is personal growth important but your team’s growth and eventually others is also.

-Have opportunities to develop leadership skills: one-on-one, seminars, retreats, and books.

-Bring in speakers/trainers.

**• Delegate work to help build the ministry** (Read Exodus 18:13-26).

**• Encourage and support each other...**nip gossip in the bud.

**• Plan and strategize**

**• Meet weekly/monthly or as often as possible**.

**• Perform team building projects within your group.**

**• Be sure everyone is on the same page** in what you believe biblically and with the direction of the church.

**• Evaluate often;** things will change. Be flexible enough to allow this change too.

**• Have a plan to deal with problems and conflict. \***

\*Job descriptions, conflict, contracts: http://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/tools.html

**What about when the team quits, fails, or doesn’t get the work done?**

**Questions to ask as their leader:**

1. Have I clearly defined the job?

2. Is the task appropriate for the team member?

3. Does the team leader have someone to help him or her with the job?

4. Does the team member have the tools they need to get the job done?

5. Are there things going on their life limiting them from getting the job done?

6. Have I or someone else spent time with this team member?

**Additional Ideas/Resources for Leaders:**

**• Get your team members to read as a part of your weekly/monthly meetings.** There are several great books on leadership. *See my site: http://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/booksbible-studies.html*

**• Have a leadership retreat/or go to one for team building.**

**The value of a retreat:**

-Develops closer relationships so you learn from each other.

-Great way to train your leaders.

-You can re-evaluate where you have been, going, future, etc.

-You can take a Spiritual gifts test (or other type of personality/gifting test) and go over it. Download a free one here: http://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/how-to-startgrowsingles-ministry.html

-Great time to pray for each other and the ministry.

**• Have your leaders wear nametags.** This is a great way to bring visibility to the ministry to those inside and outside the ministry/church.

**• Thank your team members/leaders** with a free dinner, a certificate, acknowledgment before the church or other gathering.

**• Continue to let your church staff know your needs,** how you are growing etc. so they can be involved.

**• Keep track of your singles and where they go.** If you ever need to give an account of your ministry, you can share how your singles went on to lead this or that ministry, became a missionary, got married, etc.

**• Get your single adults involved in the whole church.** Remember singles ministry is just a gateway to reach the single. It is not the end.

• Utilize our site www.TheSinglesNetwork.org; get our monthly ENEWS; purchase the books “Reaching Singles” by Dennis Franck and “Everyone Knows a Single Adult: The FAQs of Single Adult Ministry by Kris Swiatocho and Dennis Franck

***If I want 1 year of prosperity, plant some grain.***

***If you want 10 years of prosperity, grow a tree.***

***If you want a 100 years of prosperity, grow people.***

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