

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY QUESTION 24

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## Is there anything else you would like to share?

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### Responses

If I didn't have the acceptance from my church to being a single Christian woman, I'm not sure if there would have been any positivity to it. I am so grateful that I have been taught to use this time to build my relationship with God and with myself. Before, I literally was only focused on getting into a relationship good or bad. Now I know my worth.

The Bible says it's better to remain single because you can serve God better. The church does not reflect this attitude in the slightest. Rather I feel like a loser who will not have true value in the body of Christ until I have a man and some kids to give me value. It's like single people are an embarrassing secret because we are never mentioned in any way, never offered encouragement for our particular struggles nor are they even really acknowledged.

Don't ask if I'm shopping for a husband.

Thanks for being aware of this issue & trying to do something about it. Singles are very much the ignored group of the church & greatly under-utilized with it.

I find it hard to attend church being single because I feel invisible and insignificant. No one really notices if you're there or not. And people rarely check on singles to make sure we are ok.

For the would you like to get married question maybe another option for "yes if it happens."

When people speak in a way that, however unintentionally, demonstrates a belief that I must be a sad and incomplete Christian woman without a man and family of my own, I like to take the time to point out the opportunities and joys that God has given me in my situation. I often get thoughtful and surprised responses from people who had never considered the possibility of singleness as a gift.

It is very difficult being divorced or widowed in your 40's and 50's

I am single and loving it.... there isn't really any "mostly" after that. When I answer "maybe" to getting married, that is only because if God ever put someone in front of me who made my life more fun

and allowed me to serve Him better, then I would consider getting married. But, at the age of 37, I actually feel it would be very difficult and scary to have to change my ways for another person. Maybe 2-3 times a year I get a little lonely and feel it would be nice to have a partner or spouse...it's usually when I want to travel (which I do love doing myself, but would like to do with someone I really liked too) or when I wish I had mine and my spouse's income to knock out my student loans. Haha! But other than that, I'm good! I always tell people my dream job is to be a stay at home mom with no husband and no kids. (I'm still figuring out how to make this happen!)

Since I was widowed (10 years ago), I quit going to church (long story). No one cares. I know lots of members at several congregations. No one cares.

The church has been so very hurtful in my situation. I lived with a man that abused me for 29 years. Every time I wanted out of the marriage due to the abuse, I was told to get the word "divorce" out of my vocabulary and that I needed to be more submissive. My husband would be told that he needed to quit hitting me. but, I was told to stay in the marriage. When he committed adultery, he told everyone I was mentally ill and the preacher and elder and nearly everyone I called in the church refused to confront him in his sin. I was called a liar and told he was the righteous one. I was mocked and made fun of by some. I was apparently disfellowshipped because a friend told me that the elders told her to stop associating with me. This is just an abridged version.

Biblical Singleness is misunderstood in my experience.

Often the modern American church has placed an extreme emphasis on marriage and the nuclear family. As a single woman, this leaves me struggling to find my place in the church. As a Marriage and Family Therapist, this emphasis worries me for the sake of our couples and families. People need community, and the Bible talks about church as a family, rather than emphasizing individual nuclear families. The current over-emphasis on marriage and family often comes at the cost of the larger community. That puts way too much pressure on marriages to meet needs that they were never intended to meet.

Also, as of 2016 half of the adult American population was single. If the church is going to survive, it needs to find a place for people who don't have traditional families.

I have been a single person for approx. 22 years. I had/have the loving support of longtime friends & my family and have not experienced the loss/isolation that I know can happen. I was not interested in marrying again & that left me free to discover strength I did not realize I had. God has blessed me greatly and I am truly thankful.

Women who are single in the church are not a threat, we are not roaming lions looking for love. **Know our story before you quick to judge or draw an opinion.**

Sometimes we don't choose to be single, we just want to hear the voice of our heart in God's plan.

Accepting that you're OK as long as we have a relationship with the Lord

**If you know someone who's going through a divorce or has lost a spouse in one way or another, meeting them at their house & going to church with them for a while makes a world of difference. After 17 years of being with my husband, now I am so alone, & the hardest time for me is walking through the doors of the church building.**

Sunday can be one of the most lonely, isolating days for a Christian single. Invite them into your homes, ask them to sit with you at church.

Just remain a faithful and obedient Christian till death you do part

After you reach an age as a never married, nobody should label that they are not meant be married. Also, sisters in Christ should treat each other with respect.

STOP trying to hook her with every single man that may stop by! Yes, some of us would like to remarry but or may not be ready or are very picky - would the gentleman you think of be a good fit for a recently hurt family (that I could talk for a while about it! lol)

I'm part of a **house church** rather than a more traditional institutional church. When I was in a more traditional church, it was much more difficult to find community, belonging, ways to serve, etc.

Most church women, young and old, seem to believe a woman is not "useful" until she has been married and become pregnant as if a woman's place is to be with a man. In Genesis, when God creates Eve, the word used is "ezer kenegdo" meaning "help in a time of need": God refers to himself with the same word. Not just a man's helper but a helper of all. Some of us were created to be like Paul, unchained from the ties of marriage: free so that we can have eyes and minds open to everyone not just focused directly on our children and partners. Humans were created to be social loving creatures, and marriage may be great; however, for some (like me), the idea of marriage is terrifying.

I think churches do better receiving women after divorce, because they are often needy and broken, but they do a horrible job walking through the hard times and women feel the need to leave and start over somewhere else.

A church that gives the impression that a single woman is welcomed and valued is extremely important.

We're not always charity cases. Offer turkeys to all, better yet extend an invitation.

As an older single Christian woman, it would be a very welcome ministry for seniors.

The safety issue of being a single Christian woman limits what we can do and that is frustrating because a single man doesn't have that issue.

**We are made to feel as though us being single is our fault. When in fact we are just waiting on God. God never promised each of us marriage, maybe it isn't in His plan for us, but we are made to feel less than because of it.**

Our eldership has been very minimally helpful to me and have not provided leadership or a listening ear.

I am grateful that someone is taking the time to research this. Hope it will bring about some needed change in the way women are treated.

When people affirm single women, it's usually always the same talking points - God loves you and you are good enough. But I think we need to go beyond that to **normalize singleness and imagine new roles in the community that single people are particularly gifted to fill.**

Thank you for blessing us by giving this survey!

**Going back to the belief that happiness can only be found in relationships, or in a marriage/ family is so toxic.** Relationships are good things, marriage can be a good thing, and obviously a family can be a good thing, but a good thing does not necessarily it's a God thing, and I think it's important to recognize that although those are outlets in which you can definitely glorify God in, there is so many things beyond that in which we have the ability to glorify God in and we shouldn't try to find identity in those things.

I really appreciate how vocal some single women are about the path that God has brought them on. It is extremely encouraging to see how God is able to use a lifestyle that many people see as dissatisfactory.

**I think churches do a very poor job of preparing young people for those single years especially in their time before they may get married**

There are so many different factors in dealing with being single - single/single again, children/no children, age of your children. Those play a big role in a person's ease in fitting in or knowing where to get involved. For me having children has made some things a little easier, but as they grow and go on their way, I will face new challenges.

Also, from a previous question about finding places to serve at church. I don't think being single or married man or woman helps or prevents anyone from finding plenty of places to serve. Most places of service need an individual not necessarily a couple.

I have found getting to know some elderly Christians, female and male to be very beneficial for both of us. There's a lot of wisdom there and several needs of both parties can be met.

A single/single again needs more than one visit from the leadership. They and their wives need to minister with this group more than once. We are like the Orphan Train Children/A forgotten population in God's church.

We aren't contagious. We usually have lots of love to give.

I am a very blessed woman, and the Lord is always providing opportunities for me. What a joy to serve our God!!

I'm so glad you all are creating a ministry for this because I think it is such an important topic and time in women's lives where they can get closer to God!

Yes. The previous questions asked if it was easy to find somewhere to serve in the church. I had to answer yes because the children's ministry always needs volunteers. Outside of that there isn't a place. Single women may not have a young family and they probably work so daytime ladies Bible classes aren't for them either. The church doesn't know what to do with single people and for sure doesn't know what to do with single women.

We are sensitive to even the slightest hint of judgment from the congregation. There is a Single Adult Ministry in my church and it's the reason I joined, but I continue to hear others tell a single again adult that she is "not ready" for our group. Reality is we're probably where that hurting soul can best connect.

Some of what women you survey will share is perceived and self-imposed. It will take wisdom to sift that from the actual judgment and ostracism that is real. Maybe go undercover as single (if you are not) in churches where you are not known, and TRY to plug in. You will see it. They don't know what to do with you. And if they think they do, it's probably a singles class or even an active singles ministry like at my large church. In my opinion this approach is making these single men and women less mature by the minute and doing nothing to prepare them for either marriage or ministry as a celibate and holy single. It's not a meat market for sure, but it's definitely a social club and support group. And it keeps us on the fringes with no venue to engage with those we could learn from and grow with. We're single for a reason, and we're all over here sharing that dysfunction while the rest of the church plugs their nose and holds us at arm's length.

Thank you for trying to help single people.