



Why Singles Need to Stay Connected to Others ... and to God  
by Kris Swiatocho

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Fours years ago my paternal grandmother became mentally ill at the age of 79. Based on her diagnosis of dementia with paranoia, we knew that she must have been suffering a long time. I mean no one just gets mentally sick, right?

I guess you could have something tragic happen to you that could cause some mental illness, however we knew with her diagnosis that this wasn't the case. Well as soon as I heard the news, I immediately took a flight to Connecticut to see her. One of my brothers would fly in as well. She had been found in her neighborhood, wandering, knocking on doors, the nurse said. "She didn't seem to know where she was." I asked, "Can we see her?" "Sure," she said. "She appears to be better now, calm and even happy."

What I didn't know at the time was that I would end up being her custodian. I would be the one to liquidate her home, her things and her life. I would be the one (with the help of my siblings) who would decide her future. What would that future be?

She wasn't well enough to go home but was too well to stay in the hospital. Over the next several months I set off to find her a new home. As her mental health continued to decline, she was placed back and forth from the mental hospital to an assisted living residence, until one day she was so mentally ill that a nursing home was her last home. During the course of this time, I sold her home furnishings and clothes and worked with her lawyer to liquidate her estate to pay for her care. It took it all and then some -- everything she had of value. It was during this agonizing and stressful time that I found out something incredible: I had family, lots of family, on my father's side.

You see, my biological father left our family when I was 13 and never came back. He was the only child of my grandparents. My grandfather died over 15 years ago. All I had left on my father's side, I thought, was my grandmother. My father came to America when he was 15 years old. His family left siblings and parents and cousins in Poland during the war. I found out that I had tons of cousins. I eventually met them this past March for the first time. It was then that I found out something so incredible, so miraculous, that it also become a spiritual marker in my life.

### Connecting to Family

When I returned from my trip to Poland, I realized why the trip was so important. I needed to connect. I needed to have a sense of being a part of something bigger than myself. I needed to know my roots. I needed to know where I came from. I needed my family. What I didn't realize at the time was this entire experience was similar to the need to connect as single adults to each other and to God.

Many years ago when I was a very young Christian, I was still struggling with being in the world. The church I was attending did not have single adults my own age. Although, I had recommitted my life to Christ and wanted to serve him, I just didn't know what that meant. Then one day while I was out on a sales call, I met another young single adult who just happened to be a Christian. We started a friendship and she invited me to S.O.L.O (Singles Offering Life to Others). I had no idea what that was but was willing to give it a try.

SOLO was a huge single adult ministry out of a local Methodist church. At the time there were around 500 single adults ranging from 23 to 35 years old. There was also a smaller version called SOLO II for 35 years old and up. SOLO met weekly on Thursday nights and had music, a message and fellowship. There were a ton of opportunities to get plugged in, everything from greeting to hospitality, from the band to leadership, to missions, prayer and Bible study. There was even training so that you could grow into a position versus just being dropped in.



I went to SOLO fairly regularly over the next several months. However, I never got involved. I would show up, hang with new friends, and attend some of the social functions but nothing else. Then the day came, the day that would change my life. I was asked a very important question. "Hey Kris, you know we are working on a huge singles conference called "Single Light?" "We need someone to make the banner, would you be interested?" I was like "huh?" "Sure, I guess."

What I didn't even realize was they had been watching me and praying for me. They saw something in me that I had not seen. I had a purpose from God. Now there was a hitch, they would tell me that they meet weekly outside of the normal SOLO meeting time. I was like "ok." And they would also say that I would have to come to each meeting until the conference, which wasn't for 11 months. I was like "I need to come weekly for 11 months for a banner, its just a banner, I can whip that up in no time." They also would say, we do a weekly devotion. "Are you up for it?" Hmmm, I have to come each week, meet and do devotion and I guess there is probably prayer too, for one lousy banner. "Yeah, I guess so." Did it take 11 months of meeting weekly to put on a conference, probably not?

### Connecting to Each Other

This group's purpose was not just about building a conference but about connecting and building individuals along the way. You see, what I didn't know is they would involve me in the ministry of God at the place in my walk that I could do it. I wasn't able to teach a Bible study yet, or speak on stage or lead a group of single adults, but I could design a banner. This was my trade. I mean if I messed it up they could always get it done quick on their own. The banner was not what this was about. This was about building and equipping the Kingdom. This was about a relationship with me based on their relationships with God. They found common ground with me. And it was a starting point to build a future relationship that would eventually lead me to where I am today.

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

— Hebrews 13:20-21

### Connecting to God

I realized through SOLO and this conference, that I was apart of a much larger picture. My life had a purpose. I had been missing this. I had been so disconnected. Everyone needs to be connected, apart of and included. Everyone needs to know who their family is ... their roots. Everyone needs to be connected to God. Like my experience with my grandmother, I understood how important it was to know my Polish roots, however, my spiritual roots were that much more important.

Instead, we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love

— Ephesians 4:15-16

We, as single adults, have to stay connected. We have to make the time to find common ground with each other. We have to make the time to care. We have to make the time to reach out and help each other grow in our relationships with Christ. We have to make the time to disciple each other. Thank you to SOLO and the many single adults who saw something in me that only the Savior could have put in their hearts. They took a chance on a very self-focused person by encouraging me, believing and ultimately loving me.

When I am with the Gentiles who do not have the Jewish law, I fit in with them as much as I can. In this way, I gain



their confidence and bring them to Christ. But I do not discard the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are oppressed, I share their oppression so that I might bring them to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone so that I might bring them to Christ. I do all this to spread the Good News, and in doing so I enjoy its blessings.

— 1 Corinthians 9:21-23

Who do you need to connect to? Reconnect to? Who do you need to start inviting to church, to your singles ministry event? Start with connecting to God, to allow Him to remind you of your purpose then live out that purpose by connecting to others. It's not about you ... it's about Him.

Furthermore, because of Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us from the beginning, and all things happen just as He decided long ago. God's purpose was that we who were the first to trust in Christ should praise our glorious God.

— Ephesians 1:11-12

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Her second Bible study, *From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life*, was published last fall and is available on her websites. Her first book, *Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment*, was co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. [Click here](#) to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.