**A group of people sitting around a table

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**Looking for a Great Leader?**

***By Kris Swiatocho***

Often, I hear from single ministry directors how they struggle to find great leaders. Sure, they have folks who show up to help set up or stay to clean up and are willing to bring a dish of food or chip in a couple of bucks for something, but they are not true leaders.

Most singles ministries today are social based, with a strong female leading the way. Occasionally, they might offer a bible study, but the main focus is social. Then, over time, she gets tired, overworked, burning out, and eventually quitting—often resulting in the death of the ministry. Then everyone else sits around and is surprised when it happens but rarely does anything about it---like help the leader before they quit or start leading themselves.

So, what is going on? Where are all the leaders? Where are all those people who supposedly love God, their singles ministry, and want to serve, but yet think it's someone else job to lead? How do they expect a ministry to thrive without great leaders? How do they expect to fulfill the great commission by killing the main leader one barbecue at a time?

**Leadership comes with various skills and abilities.**

While not everyone is a "front of the class" type person, everyone can contribute to the ministry's overall leadership, vision, and service. It's the role of a servant more than anything else. But it is also a role where others are coming behind to learn. Maybe this is where the issue really is…while we look like a Christian with our cool t-shirts and bumper stickers, we talk like one—"Praise God" and "I am praying for you." ---, we are not really growing in the Lord.

We continue to stay stuck in the past, in anger, living in fear of the present and the future. We choose to remain unhealthy---even though we need counseling. We would prefer to whine and complain instead of growing up to help reach people for Jesus. Also, we compromise in our dating relationships, often dating on a rebound due to a failed marriage or the death of a spouse without seeking God's direction.

If we aren't growing in our walk with the Lord, it is challenging to be an example to others, much less lead them. There is where I think the issue is with finding leaders. Most Christians are still infants in their walks with God and prefer it that way.

**A great leader requires:**

**F: That you are faithful to God, to others, and to serving consistently but not perfect.** This doesn't mean you have it all together or you don't have good and bad seasons of life; it just means there is an overall consistency of following the Lord, wanting to grow, and wanting to make changes to get as healthy as you can for the Lord.

*Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

**A: That you are available.** If you have difficulty showing up, doing the work, or being present due to over-committing in other areas of your life, such as work, family, friends, activities, etc., this must be addressed first. If God is calling you to serve in singles ministry as a leader, you may need to step down in other areas or learn more about boundaries or how to say "no, simply." A great resource to help you with this is the study "Intentional Relationships for Singles," where an entire chapter is devoted to this topic. You will not win favor with God or others if you consistently say you will be there and not show up or have multiple excuses, no matter how valid the reason is. A great leader follows through with the commitment.

*1 Kings 8:61 Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day."*

**T: Are teachable.** If we are going to be successful in singles ministry or any ministry in life, we have to be willing to make changes—as a ministry, as a team, and as individuals. Believe me, I know it's hard. But a great leader thinks of the goal of God, not themselves. A great way to tell if you are teachable is in how you listen to others if you feel like you always have to get in your two cents' worth. Another great way is by asking friends to hold you accountable getting their input into your behavior. You need to work on this area if you become defensive every time. Often, people who are not teachable struggle with being in control. A person with a teachable spirit is humble.   
  
*Proverbs 15:32 Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.*

**What does it spell? FAT…so are you FAT? Or SKINNY? A great leader is not:**

**S: Selfish.** Do you wait till the last minute to commit to going to a singles event to see if something better comes up? Are you one of those folks that never RSVP's but then shows up? There is no room for a ministry to grow if it's about you and only you.

*Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

**K: Killer.** Are you negative, attacking, or a killer of other people's ideas, direction, or input? Are people a threat who might have done things differently than you, or what's always been done? For a ministry to thrive, we need everyone's input and ideas. There are many ways to reach a destination. Plus, it can be fun to do things differently. Who knows, it might just be better.

*1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*

**I: There is No "I" in Team.** Hmm, are we seeing a pattern here?When I was a young single, I was on my first team. While initially difficult, I eventually loved the value of others, their gifts, help, and support. I also learned so much from them.

*Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!*

**N: Nothing:** Do you like for people to think you are one of the ministry's leaders, but in reality, you do nothing to very little? Often, this comes across in letting folks know "you" brought this food, gave this money, or showed up to help (this one time). A great leader not only leads but they do many things, and they don't boast about it.

*Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

**N: No.** You say no to being a leader without even praying about it. Without asking more questions or what the expectations might be. Often, people don't commit to being a leader due to seeing what being a leader might entail. Some of this is at the fault of the main leader, who hasn't put on paper job titles and descriptions, expectations, etc. How can you teach others who come behind you if you aren't sure of your job? Please know every leadership role can be altered, adjusted, or shared. This isn't corporate America---this is a ministry. While structure is essential for growth, it's also about building people in Christ. So, if the leadership structure needs to change to meet people where they are, this is OK, AND you might help gather leaders.

*Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

**Y: You.** It's about you. It's about building your kingdom. OK, this has now shown up for the third time. We don't have others leading because it's still about them, what they get from the ministry, how it meets their needs, etc. And unfortunately, when the ministry dies, they will just go to the next one they find. However, in this country, our singles ministries are struggling. We may not have that option in the future. So don't wait till it fails; ask God what he wants you to do.

*Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

**Next step?**  
1. Challenge your folks to step up. Start meeting with people individually to learn more about them and share the vision of the ministry and how they might serve. Let them share any concerns or problems they see with you and others.

2. Make sure you have a job title and description that they have input to tweak to fit their lives. You can download a free edible one here.

3. Pray with them and encourage them to pray about the leadership role.

4. If they aren't ready to lead, ask them for a more significant commitment to serving. For example, put them in charge of setting up or cleaning up for one event per month. Or they call to make lunch reservations after church each month, or they provide water for each Bible study, etc. This way, they slowly become a part of your team, allowing you to get to know each other better. And then eventually adding more responsibility to one day being a leader.

**The enemy wants you to leave—God wants you to succeed.**

Often, leaders burn out before they let others know they are struggling. Involve other leaders, your pastor, and key volunteers with the status of the ministry, including what you are experiencing. This could lead the ministry to do fewer events, to reduce the workload, and/or some folks stepping up to help lead. Either way, the goal is to involve your team in the ministry's leadership so that it is around as long as God desires it, helping to change lives, one single at a time.

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• [www.TheSinglesNetwork.org](http://www.TheSinglesNetwork.org)

• [www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org](http://www.KrisSwiatochoMinistries.org)

• [www.LaborDaySingles.org](http://www.LaborDaySingles.org)

• [www.IntentionalRelationshipSolutions.org](http://www.intentionalrelationshipsolutions.org/)