**Six Characteristics of a Healthy Singles Ministry *by Alex Florea***

Can the words “healthy” and “singles ministry” be used in the same sentence? Yes, if the ministry has these important characteristics. When I was in my 20s and single, I moved to a new town. I found a church and shared my desire to get involved in a small group. I was immediately assigned to the church’s singles, small group.

​I vividly remember walking each week past a lively, multi-generational Sunday school class to join a tiny group of socially awkward misfits. I felt like I was being sent to time-out in the corner (we literally met in a corner) or banned to the “kids' table” at Thanksgiving, unable to participate in adult conversation.

Undoubtedly, well-intentioned leaders had organized the small groups in a way they thought best. But being assigned to a singles group, separated from everyone else, seemed like a strange form of church discipline. After all, I simply wanted to fellowship with the body of Christ regardless of life stage or demographic.

You may have had a similar experience of feeling marginalized or segregated by singles groups. Do they have to be this way? Can a ministry for unmarried young adults be a good thing? Can the words “healthy” and “singles ministry” even be used in the same sentence?
There is no cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all philosophy that applies to every church. There are, however, some essential characteristics that should be a hallmark of any singles ministry. I’ll list six here.

1) It is devoted to studying God’s Word. A healthy singles ministry is focused on the teaching of the Bible. Without the truths of God’s Word, we are left with opinions based on human logic and reasoning.

A lot of the discussion in singles groups revolves around a few topics. Yup, you guessed it. Dating and sex…and how to be content in your singleness. Although it’s good to discuss these topics from a biblical perspective, the balanced Christian life is far more than wondering who we might marry or whether courtship is better than dating.
The Bible is a practical guide, addressing every area of life. A healthy singles ministry will elevate the Word of God as the primary tool for spiritual nourishment, encouragement, correction, and life transformation.

2) It is accountable to a local church. When a singles ministry comes under the local church's authority, there is an added level of accountability and a greater sense of belonging to something greater than itself. We are called to be active participants in a local gathering of believers (Hebrews 10:25)

Singles ministries should encourage involvement in a formal worshiping body, not compete with it.

The local church is important to God, so much so that Acts 20:28 specifically says that Christ purchased it with His blood. If it matters to God, it should matter to us. This is reflected in the investment of our time and financial giving through tithes and offerings.

The mission of the local church should be the driving passion of any singles ministry: glorifying God through sanctification (1 Thess 4:3) discipleship and evangelism (Matteh 28:19).

A healthy church leadership team should, in turn, understand that single people are important members of the body of Christ. Failing to utilize the unique gifts of single men and women is a huge mistake. The local church should also avoid separating demographics in a way that limits fellowship among different life stages. When segregation occurs, mentoring and discipleship are stunted.

3) It discourages consumerism. Singles ministries can be notorious for attracting “church-hoppers.” This person goes from one group to the next with little or no intent to commit. They are on the never-ending quest to find the “perfect” group (or the “perfect” spouse).

We’ve all had the tendency to have a “what’s in it for me” attitude when visiting a church or small group, but if left unchecked, this mentality creates an unhealthy environment for everyone.

Rather, we should strive to make the group better by finding ways to serve. Welcoming a new person, participating in group discussion or simply showing up consistently are all practical ways to aid in the health of the ministry. Likewise, the singles ministry as a whole should be active in serving, glorifying God by meeting church, community and even world needs through service projects, volunteering, foreign missions and more.

A person with a healthy, others-centered mindset is not only better equipped to have a greater impact on the body of Christ, but to be a better friend, family member, employee and future spouse. A Christ-honoring, Bible-based singles ministry understands this.

4) It facilitates fellowship. It has been said that fellowship is “two fellows in the same ship.” Cute, I know. But the picture is very accurate. A healthy singles ministry is one that encourages real, accountable relationships with others who are in the same life stage, heading in the same direction.

It is comforting when we find others who understand what we are going through. A healthy singles ministry helps members form friendships, enjoy social time together, build common bonds, and provide practical encouragement to better trust God in the journey.

5) It is shepherded by a plurality of diverse leaders. A healthy singles ministry is one that has a diverse group of committed, mature leaders from all stages of life (singles, marrieds, older singles, older marrieds).

When the singles ministry leadership team does not consist of varying demographics, it can have some pretty major blind spots. But when there are differing perspectives coming from different backgrounds and life experiences, a healthy balance is achieved.

Singles ministries are in danger of attracting unhealthy people. A community committed to spiritual and emotional health provides a space for the struggling person to mature. However, without the protection and watchful eye of a leadership core, the ministry can quickly go downhill if these people refuse to change. When a person is confronted with sin and called into accountable relationships, they will either grow or they will move on. Either way, the group remains healthy.

6) It produces godly marriages. And last but certainly not least, a healthy singles ministry produces healthy marriages (sorry, no personal guarantees!). When singles are living in Christian community, this is a natural outcome.

Obviously, if everyone’s only life goal is to get married and that’s the motivating factor for them attending, the group will only resemble a meat market. But if the collective focus is spiritual growth and service, healthy friendships form and turn into purposeful dating relationships.

Yes, the potential of finding a spouse is a very real possibility in a Christ-centered singles ministry.

Now What? If you are currently in a singles ministry and believe there are some unhealthy dynamics, rather than leaving or complaining, I would encourage you to sit down with a pastor or leader and share your thoughts. Try to be part of the solution.

If you desire to start a singles group at your church, there are some great resources [here at Boundless](https://www.boundless.org/category/adulthood/being-single/) to help you know where to start. Pray about it. Seek the input from a trusted friend. Team up with a pastor or church leader and go for it!

Finally, if you are a member of a small church or there are limited resources at your church, many of these principles can still be implemented within your church body. With or without a singles ministry, God can bless your efforts as you serve Him in the context of your local church.

Wherever you find yourself now or as you explore the possibilities above, know that you are a valuable part of the body of Christ, with unique needs, gifts and opportunities to contribute. God will be faithful to direct you in your journey as you look to Him alongside the brothers and sisters around you.

To read the original article on the Boundless site, [click here](https://www.boundless.org/blog/6-characteristics-of-a-healthy-singles-ministry/).