



## Successful Singles Ministry: Men Growing Men by Kris Swiatocho

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NOTE: If you have a growing singles ministry and it's made up of mostly women including the leaders and you are happy, then this article is not for you. If you are a singles ministry who desires to be more successful by having it balanced with more men, then read on to hear my suggestions.

As a leader and teacher of single adult ministry for the last 25 years, I get asked over and over again how to start a singles ministry. At least 8 out of 10 of those asking are women. Women who have a passion and heart to reach singles. Women who themselves see the need in the church. Women who often get tired of waiting for their pastors to start something. Women who are headed for failure because they lack the one crucial part that is needed for success. Besides consistent prayer, church support and the ability to build leaders, successful singles ministry, I have found, has the best success rate when co-led by male and female leaders. I mean, if you want to have a single adult women's ministry, then praise the Lord. But if you want it to be co-ed, then you must find a man to help.

"Men leaders can grow men and women, men and women leaders can grow men and women but only women leaders grow women."

Now please, don't start sending me feedback saying the opposite. I know there are some very successful ministries led by women (I have led several ones myself), but I also found with these ministries that there was a huge support system—a system with male leaders and pastors ready to help as needed. A system that most single adults viewed as a partnership of leadership versus just one lady leading things. Great women leaders know the value of placing men and women of various backgrounds and giftings under them. They know we need men to reach other men. The last church I was on staff at had a male pastor over me who would assist me in anything I needed from teaching to prayer to handling issues to attending events. People viewed him as a co-partnership of the singles ministry even though he didn't attend everything we did.

So why is this? Why can't women grow single adult ministries like a man? Well, please know it's nothing we as women have done wrong. It's simply what God designed in us as male and female. In order for a male to grow to be the man God wants him to be, he needs to be led by another male. I am not saying women can't teach a man or offer insight or some wisdom of truth. I am just saying that our role as women should be to encourage, support, pray and honor the role God has given men directly. The same is true for women, too. Men can only disciple women to a point. There comes a time when it's not safe for a single male leader to be alone with a single lady. There are things in life that only another woman can understand. So when there are only women leading a ministry, they tend to draw only other women (and the occasional unhealthy male). Please know, as our single adults get older, we already have more women coming than men. So this makes it that much more important to have a male co-leader to help reach those men that aren't coming.

So what is the co-leader's role? Most women seem to be doing all the roles with what appears to be success. Well, not really. If you were that successful, you would have more men coming. So when you do find this man, then what is his role so that you can get a more balanced ministry?

I personally like to get men up in front as much as possible. They can open in prayer, make announcements,



and so on at first with the goal to get them to facilitate a small group or other study. This can eventually lead to them teaching a small group or Sunday school class or even leading the ministry.

I also ask men to call/e-mail/text other men to invite them to our events and studies.

I often put men into small groups when discussing questions during our Sunday school class or events to give them time to bond. As women, we bond in the restroom.

I encourage men to hang out separately from the women. I try and get one man to be willing to be the point person for a ball game, dinner at a sports restaurant, camping or fishing trip. If he is the point person once, he may do it again.

I value their contribution of ideas and input for the ministry. I encourage their help.

I do less and ask them to do more. I talk less and allow them to talk more.

I celebrate even the tiniest of things they do in hopes it will encourage them to do more.

You see ladies, men know we will do it all because we have done it all. So in order to allow them to lead, we have to often let some things go. When men visit our ministries and see other men that look and appear like them, they are more likely to return. But if these men only see a group of cackling women—or worse case, attacking cackling women—they will turn and run. Please know it all takes time. But if you commit this to prayer and start encouraging the existing men to help in various areas that give them visibility, you will be on the right path. And you can't ever give up, ever.

What if you don't have any men who could step up? Well, sometimes our ministries only have unhealthy men or men who are simply not able to lead in any way (even after years of encouraging and training). These men either do not have the calling or are not mature yet themselves. So sometimes I will ask a married man to help out—either a pastor, deacon/elder or other church leader. Sometimes there is a really good teacher who is married that could come in and co-teach the class with the agreement to help grow the men. This could be a temporary situation. I have also gone to my church leaders to ask for help and prayer. If there is an assigned pastor to this ministry, I will ask that pastor to come in and be a visible man in the ministry. I have also asked this pastor to attend some of our events, again to show visibility and support to the ministry. At one church where I was on staff, they actually assigned a deacon and his wife to each of our Sunday school classes (whole church) for one Sunday a month. I asked this couple if they would be willing to teach that one Sunday, as well as help with following up with men. I also asked them to attend some of our events to help them be more visible to other men. Boy, what a difference it made.

Bottom line, in order to get healthier men in your singles ministry, you have to reach them and grow them through other healthy men. We as women can help. We can pray for our men, value how God has placed them in our churches and ministries to lead and foremost, step down in certain areas to allow men to step up. Ladies, I know you are willing to do whatever God wants you to do, but you will never know how much greater ministry is when it's co-led by a male. So put it to prayer and wait on God.



When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts (Acts 11:23).

\*\*I know there are several male-led ministries that aren't growing. All ministries directed by women or men still need to be able to lead and grow other leaders so that the ministry will grow. Just because a ministry has a male leader or co-leader does not mean guaranteed success. Co-leadership is simply the best design to reach all singles for Christ.

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.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!