

DELAYED IN MARRIAGE AMONG CHRISTIAN YOUTH AND ITS CHALLENGES
FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY IN IJEBU BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

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ABSTRACT

This research work titled Delayed in marriage among Christian Youth and its challenges for pastoral ministry in Ijebu Baptist Association is carried out with a view of providing insight for the church and ministry at large on how to deal with this seemingly insignificant but potentially dangerous challenge.

The study used questionnaire to extract the opinions of church members and church leaders and interview medical personnel. The study was carried out on ten churches and church leaders in Ijebu Baptist Association, Ogun Baptist Conference. The questionnaire was administered in selected churches. One hundred questionnaires were sent out, but eighty two were received for analysis. However, the researcher provided some possible solutions to reduce this predicament of late marriage among Christian youth. In summary, the church should educate her members on marriage that there are several ways of organizing marriage without been indebted due to poor economy. It was also recommended that the church through the pastor should be involved in curbing of this contemporary challenge of late marriage. The church and members of the larger society should accord them due respect like their married counterpart. The church and the society should not deny them of lawful and rightful responsibilities. Position and offices due to them should not be denied. Those who have demonstrated high level of responsibility and commitment in the church and secular life should be recognized and rewarded accordingly.

5.2 Conclusion

Having gone through this research work it can be concluded that late marriage is a contemporary problem among Christian singles in Ijebu Baptist Association, Ogun Baptist Conference. Some single adults who are up to the age of marriage are experiencing delay in getting marriage partners. Although some single adults in the society are also trying to postpone marriage due to some factors but the society frown at it because of our cultural value placed on the issue of marriage and child bearing. Some of the factors responsible for delay in marriage include: inability to get marriage partner, lack of pre-marital counselling, problem of cohabitation and sexuality, cultural differences, religious differences, and many other social and personal issues.

The role of pastor in helping this problem is very crucial. Pastoral care and counselling aims at nurturing, growing and healing persons through each stage of lives. Then pastors' intervention in helping the single adults who are experiencing delay in marriage is inevitable. The larger society is only putting stigma of reproach on these people through segregation and various ways of abuse. The pastors should approach late marriage through sound and effective marriage and pre-marital counselling, involvement in marriage process and quality teachings on purpose of

marriage among many others. Therefore, the church through the pastor must intervene in the process of reducing the menace of late marriage among Christian singles. Singles are encouraged to marry early in life putting all necessary factors such as socio-cultural, medical and spiritual into consideration.

5.3 Recommendations

With reference to the findings from this research work which was carried out among churches in Ijebu Baptist Association, Ogun Baptist Conference in view of pastoral responses to the problem of late marriage among Christian singles, the researcher hereby make the following recommendations.

1. Churches should help singles who are having delay in getting marriage partners through pastoral intervention.
2. The church and members of the larger society should accord them due respect like their married counterpart.
3. The church and the society should not deny them of lawful and rightful responsibilities. Position and offices due to them should not be denied. Those who have demonstrated high level of responsibility and commitment in the church and secular life should be recognized and rewarded accordingly.
4. The church through pastoral responses should provide effective pastoral care and counselling for singles who are having delayed marriage. One-on-one counselling could be adopted alongside general counselling.
5. Special program targeted towards the needs of these singles should be designed by the pastors. They should not be left with normal worship service. Special prayers, marriage seminars, single forum and other youth centred programs should be organised.

6. Parent should be educated on how to relate with their singles that are having marriage delayed. They should learn how to counsel their children on the choice of marriage partner. Singles who are having delayed should maximise the opportunity of singleness to achieve many other things. They should not lose their moral value and integrity because of the situation. Singles should plan and pursue their marriage process early in life as they do for their educational and professional career. Both should go simultaneously.