

**DELAY IN GETTING MARRIED AMONG LADIES IN THE  
NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION: A PROPOSED CHURCH BASED  
SOLUTION**

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## ABSTRACT

This essay is titled “Delay in Getting Married Among Ladies in the Nigerian Baptist Convention: A Proposed Church Based Solution.” It is an attempt to examine the menace being caused by late marriage among ladies in the Baptist setting. It is carried out with a view to providing insight for the church at large on how to deal with this seemingly insignificant but potentially dangerous problem.

Ladies who have attained the age of thirty and above but not engaged form the group studied for this work. Also, pastors who are on churches within the Nigerian Baptist Churches were interviewed in order to measure the extent of the problem and elicit information on the way out.

The essay as such contains five chapters. The first chapter deals with the Introduction – the Background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and significance of the study, research questions and definition of terms. The second chapter is the review of relevant literature which gives the biblical position as well as writers views on the subject. The third chapter is the methodology. This treats the means of data gathering which is principally through questionnaires and interviews.

Chapter four gives the analysis of data and discusses findings. The fifth chapter is a summary of the whole work and reveals that the church as the spiritual home of the believers has a vocal role to play in helping the aching members in this group. This chapter therefore contains the ways by which the church can be of assistance on this matter.

## CONCLUSION

Smith Alexander's (1980) words come rightly to mind when he said that the church should dare not and must not ignore the significant segment of the adult population constituted by the singles. He regarded this group as one of the "needing" segments of the congregation that must not be overlooked. Single's needs are the same as that of couples, though these needs are often met differently by the church. Many of these needs of the singles are, however, best met in the company of other singles bearing in mind that "singles need the leavening effect of the overall life of the church for maximum individual spiritual growth and development" (Smith, 1980, p.6).

The way and manner of relationship with ladies who are experiencing delay in marriage is important. It should be such that is devoid of suspicion or overlaid by cutting remarks. An idea of the categories of these so called "single" ladies would be of help. Smith (1980) categorized them into three, namely; persons who have chosen to remain single; Those who have not had the opportunity to marry and; Individuals whose special life circumstance makes it inadvisable for them to marry, p. 8-9. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 provided every person with freedom of many kinds. Marriage should be one of those things over which man can exercise

freedom to or not to. There should be no compulsion to it, so that those who decide to remain unmarried can actually do so without stress. Those who are awaiting the opportunity can enjoy their freedom as long as it lasts. The individuals who had no choice but live chaste lives due to circumstance should be able to do so without pang of guilt.

Ladies who are having delay in getting married must learn to function as a whole person; to appreciate the freedom which is theirs as singles; to find fulfillment in their chosen careers. They equally need to develop their spiritual gifts and serve others. If such ladies enjoy traveling they should not hesitate to do so. They can join forces together by creating a network of support for emotional, physical, social and spiritual well-being for one another. They should learn to live above pity of any kind. They need to find out what is important to them, not what is important to their friends, pastors, parents or leaders (Tompkins, 1975, p. 71). When these are considered life would be worth living and fulfillment would not be based on what is ephemeral.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings from the research carried out the following recommendations are made;

Each local church should help ladies who are delayed in getting married in her midst. Such ladies should be given due regard and responsibilities that would give them a sense of belonging. Due consideration should be accorded them while special programmes are being organized in the church. Also, the church members should be counseled to stop looking down on them. Special programmes that could meet the needs of these groups should be put in place.

The church should also know that it is high time to consider appointing these ladies who have demonstrated high sense of responsibilities and credibility into

principal positions. These are the offices of secretary and deaconate. Marital status should not constitute a barrier to serving the Lord. If this is not a condition for making heaven, it should not be imposed on service here on earth. The church should not wait until the ladies to be confrontational about this like the daughters of Zelophehad did in Numbers 27:1-11, before they are cared for!

Counseling sessions should be organized for ladies right from the time as they attain the age of eighteen. The church and parents should not wait until they have a problem on their hands before they start to look for a way out. It was revealed from the findings that counsel from appropriate quarters if available early enough could prevent a lot of headaches.

Parents and church members should be educated on the need to see delay in getting married of their daughters as a blessing rather than a curse. When perceived as such, it will be better approached and remove a lot of bitterness. It could be that the ladies are delayed in order for God to protect them from one evil or the other. Such may be death of spouse early in marriage or delay in child bearing. It could also be a time of maturing for some ladies. Therefore, parents, friends and church members should not unduly press the ladies into taking desperate steps.

The church can set-up a marriage committee whose responsibility would be majorly prayer. Prayers are needed for the ladies and their parents. The church also has the duty of paying regular visits to these ladies and their family members. This will encourage the ladies and enhance their attendance in church activities.

Aside from organizing group programmes, the church should also organize a one-on-one counseling sessions whereby the ladies can be helped individually. This will help the church to find out more facts that may not be forth-coming during group session. Such facts could be related to the ladies' personal problems, background and

family history that are very useful in helping them. The Church and the society should also be educated on the meaning of a one-unit family, and of responding to them as such. While ladies should marry men that appeal to them, they should not be too choosy about it. They should know that no man is perfect; they need to make room for imperfection. Ladies should also not place academic and career over and above marriage. Both should be pursued simultaneously bearing in mind that life is not consisted in career or marriage alone but in that which has eternal value.

#### **RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY**

This study is on delay in getting married among ladies and it is limited to the Nigerian Baptist denomination. Future research can therefore be carried out on;

1. Delay in getting married among ladies in other denominations.
2. The medical implications of delay in getting married.