

CHURCH MINISTRY TO THE CHALLENGES OF SINGLE MOTHERHOOD
AMONG FEMALE MEMBERS IN OGBOMOSO GOSHEN BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION

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ABSTRACT

This research titled; Church Ministry to the Challenges of Single Motherhood among Female Members of the Church. Single motherhood is a problem because it's a challenges associated with family members of the church and the society in general. Such challenges include emotional imbalance which affects their livelihood, inability of mothers to provide good parental care necessary for the children development. The challenges of untold hardship on single parents such as loneliness, insecure, helpless and uncared for by the church and the society. This research aimed at finding solution to the cause of single parenting and how to minister to their challenges. In order to achieve this, researcher used a designed questionnaire. The selected population is Ogbomosho Goshen Baptist Association. The study considered the perception of people and their attitude toward single parenting and considered some of the causes. Findings include the factors that cause single parenting which includes: divorce, teenage pregnancy and death of spouse. The consequences of single parenting were also discovered in the research like psychological, spiritual, physical, moral and emotional. In the light of this problem, literature written by religious scholars, who addressed family matters and parenting were examined to obtain useful information as regard to this predicament and solutions. In view of these findings, the following recommendations were made. These include: that the pastor should acting as advocate between the single parents and the church to see this group of people as part of the family of the church to be associated with in respect of the cause that led them to single parenting. The pastor should also understand that the ministry of single parenting is not to be carried alone. The pastor should raise group of interested people among the congregation who will work with him. Teaching of basic Biblical principles of marriage and sex education should be emphasised in Bible study and pastors messages in the church. The teaching can be planned around God's plan for marriage and the negative effects of broken home. The church should understand that they own role of healing ministry to the single parents that were suffering from the trauma of death of spouse, divorce and desertion. This can be done by giving financial, material support and spiritual encouragement to them. Also the church pastor in his teaching should emphasise pastoral care and counseling with single parents. The young single parents should prayerfully and carefully consider remarriage as a solution to their singleness and find someone to make life meaningful for them. Single parents on their own should not see their condition as the end of life; they must do something to improve their own situation, by making necessary adjustment that will help them go on with life. Some single parents have lost their financial power because of their situation and the responsibility they carried alone. The church can give them financial assistance, through the church missionary organization such as the Men and Women missionary union, to reduce their burdens. The church should enroll the single parents on welfare package, to help their children cope with academic work so that they will not drop out of school, due to financial reason. The pastor should encourage the church members and relations of single parent to develop a loving relationship with them to reduce the level of loneliness. Pastors should consider other approaches along with the spiritual approaches in addressing the challenges that are facing single parents.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The challenges and the increase of single parenting around us today call for urgent address by the pastor and the church to minister to their needs in such a time as this. The single parents faced many challenges which the church and the pastor who seek to minister to them must find solution to. Creating special ministry for single parents in our church will go a long way solving some of these common problems that happened to the single parents in our churches. Parenting alone can be very stressful and challenging especially when the children are still young. How should the church and the pastor minister to the need of single parents by organizing retreat, seminar, teachings and providing them with basic need of life as it was early addressed meeting spiritual needs alone cannot solve their problems. Other means like financial assistance should be part of their packaging in the situations where the single parents cannot cope financially. Provisions should be in place to support them in payment of their children's school fees. The scripture also has it that Jesus meets both spiritual and physical needs of the people he ministered to in his days. The church of Christ today should follow the foot step of their master Jesus.

To conclude, pastor should educate and mobilize the church to see the need of this group of people in the church and be ready to support them. The church missionary organization like the men and women missionary unions and youth fellowship can be of great help to this group of people in the church.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This research work has proved to us the fact that the numbers of single parents in our churches and community is increasing due to unavoidable causes like death of spouse and avoidable causes like divorce and teenage pregnancy. The side effect of this is the experience that the single parents are passing as they are not adequately catered for by the church and their families due to the economic challenges we are facing in the country. The church on his own part should see to the best way he will stand to rescue this set of people in our churches.

The following recommendations can be steps to help and solve some of the problems confronting single parents in our churches.

First, the pastor should be an advocate between the single parents and the church to see this group of people as part of the family of the church to be associated with in respect of the cause that led them to single parenting.

Second, the pastor should understand that the ministry of single parenting is not to be carried alone. The pastor should raise group of interested people among the congregation who will work with him. The wider the ministry, the more effective it will work.

Third, teaching of basic Biblical principles of marriage and sex education should be emphasised in Bible study and pastors messages in the church. The teaching can be planned around God's plan for marriage and the negative effects of broken home.

Fourth, the church should have reconsidered her stand toward single parents no matter the situation that leads to single parenting. The church should have it in mind

that those single parents are already being down cast and demoralized. They need someone to encourage them and build them up.

Fifth, the church should understand that they own role of healing ministry to the single parents that were suffering from the trauma of death of spouse, divorce and desertion. This can be done by giving financial, material support and spiritual encouragement to them.

Sixth, the church pastor in his teaching should emphasise pastoral care and counseling with single parents. Single parent's seminars, family counseling marriage seminars and Bible study. The church should involve in some other ways possible in caring for single parents.

Seventh, the young single parents should consider remarriage as a solution to their singleness and find someone to make life meaningful for them. This move must be prayerful and carefully carried out so as not add to the existing problem.

Eighth, the single parents on their own should not to see their condition as the end of life, they must do something to improve their own situation, by making necessary adjustment that will help them go on with life, for the downfall of a man is not the end of his life.

Ninth, some single parents have lost their financial power because of their situation and the responsibility they are alone. The church can give them financial assistance, through the church missionary organization such as the men and women missionary union, to reduce their burdens.

Tenth, the church should enroll the single parents on welfare package, to help their children cope with academic work so that they will not drop out of school, due to

financial reason. The pastor should encourage the church members and relations of single parent to develop a loving relationship with them to reduce the level of loneliness.