

Single friendly Church

A CAMPAIGN HELPING CHURCHES TO INCLUDE SINGLE ADULTS

INCLUDING SINGLE PEOPLE AT CHRISTMAS



CHRISTMAS CAN BE A DIFFICULT TIME

Christmas can be a hard time for single people, especially if they don't have wider family to spend the day with. This is particularly the case for older and disabled singles, who may not see another person for the whole Christmas period.

How can your church make the festive season a joyful time for the single people in your community?

01. FIND OUT WHO WILL BE ON THEIR OWN

Find out who in your church will be alone over Christmas and ask them what they need. Some people may feel awkward to reveal they have no one to spend Christmas with, and few would feel comfortable inviting themselves to someone else's gathering. Reach out and ask, let them know they're cared for.

Don't forget those who are widowed, single parents whose children may be spending Christmas with their other parent, as well as married people whose spouse isn't at home. Bear in mind not all single people want an invitation - some will have plans already or will prefer to have a quiet Christmas at home.



02. INVITE SOMEONE TO JOIN YOU

Could you invite someone to join you for the day, or for Christmas dinner? Could you encourage others to do the same? This can be explicitly suggested from the pulpit, or discreetly mentioned to families who may be in a position to offer hospitality. Singles tell us this makes a huge difference to their sense of being noticed, cared for and included. You could also connect a group of people who will be on their own to spend the day together.



"One year I was upset to find myself facing Christmas on my own, but I didn't want to invite myself to anyone's family celebration. However, when a friend told people at church that I was going to be alone, I got several invitations. I had a lovely day with a family from church."

03. BE MINDFUL WHEN PLANNING SERVICES

Christmas can be a painful time for many single people because of the focus on families and children. It can emphasise their lack of a partner or family and make them feel more alone. This can also be true for couples who don't have the children they long for; those who've lost loved ones; people who've experienced a family break-down; full-time carers and many more.

Be mindful of this when planning services and sermons. Acknowledge them in the prayers, include everyone in the service, and perhaps offer an opportunity to light a candle for someone they've lost.



04. HOLD A SIMPLE SERVICE OVER THE HOLIDAYS



While many are glad of a break from church after Christmas morning, this isn't the case for everyone. The sudden stopping of services can leave a gap and take away an important point of connection for single people.

Consider doing something short and low-effort such as morning prayer in church or on Zoom during the 5 days when people will be with their families, so that those on their own have a chance to connect. If possible, leave the church open for some of the days after Christmas so that people can come and pray.

05. KEEP IN TOUCH OVER THE HOLIDAY

Even if single people have arrangements for Christmas Day itself, the rest of the festive period can be a quiet and potentially lonely time. Those who are housebound or unwell would particularly appreciate a phone call. Encourage church members to keep in contact and consider those who may be on their own. Many single people would welcome an invitation for a walk, film night, board games afternoon or other festive activities.



'I'm lucky that I have family who include me on Christmas Day, but I often find church and life quite lonely around the festive period. As someone who doesn't have a car, I'm most blessed when people offer me a lift to services. I also appreciate being invited round for a meal or drink in the run up to Christmas.'

PRAYER POINTS FOR CHURCHES

- Pray for those who don't know how they will be spending Christmas, for the stress and uncertainty that this can bring.
- Pray for those who are feeling the loss of loved ones this Christmas, those mourning relationship breakdowns, and those coming to terms with the possibility that they may not be able to have children.
- Give thanks for the opportunity people have to catch up with old friends at Christmas.
- Praise God that people can find family, acceptance and love in church communities at Christmas.
- Give thanks for the work and sacrifice individuals do to help the poorest in our society at Christmas.
- Pray for everyone experiencing financial hardship at Christmas and the pressures it can bring.
- Pray for single parents at this time who may feel the pressure to produce all aspects of Christmas by themselves, or who may be spending Christmas without their children.
- Pray for all those end up in refuges over Christmas, or who are afraid to go home and spend extended time with their spouse or family.
- Pray for those who experience loneliness over the Christmas holidays.
- Pray for people who feel huge pressure to bring a holiday or partner home for Christmas, for understanding and acceptance amongst family, and for hope and comfort for those longing for a romantic relationship.
- Pray for those currently going through divorce or separation over the Christmas season, and may be spending their first Christmas alone.
- Pray for those whose family or partner have dementia or other neurological conditions and may not recognise them over Christmas.
- Pray especially for single church leaders at Christmas, where there is huge pressure to run Christmas services and activities, and they may not have family or friends waiting for them at home.

