

The Challenge of Singleness

In this workshop, we will explore the Christian understanding of singleness, its place in the Church, and its relation to marriage, family life, and sexuality. We will show its unique purpose in and out of the body of Christ. Christian singleness is a specific witness to the presence of the kingdom and the coming Christ, putting many contemporary idols into question. In the context of European churches, the value of singleness needs to be rediscovered as an honoured lifestyle and calling open both to those who prefer single life and to those who may discover it as their calling in the midst of life's various challenges.

Marek Macák was born in Slovakia, but currently lives and works in the Czech Republic, where he got his master's degree in psychology. He is a clinical psychologist. He also teaches at Prague's Evangelical theological seminary and the Institute for Clinical Psychology and functions as a supervisor for psychologists in several mental health institutions. In 2011, he founded the Society for the Dialogue of Christianity and Psychology. In the past, he worked as a local youth leader in the Czech Baptist Union, where he still currently serves on the national board for Baptist youth work. In various denominations, Mark often teaches on a variety of topics, especially on friendship, sexuality, and mental health. He is single, living in an intentional community, and he likes to use the resources provided by his singleness to serve the Church and a wider community of professionals, friends, and neighbours.

I. The purpose of singleness

A. Singleness and the Church

1. Old Testament witness
2. Singleness in the New Testament
3. Singleness in today's context

B. In relation to marriages

C. In relation to family life

II. The state and the calling of singleness

A. Integrity in temporary singleness

B. Singleness as a calling

III. Singleness as a challenge

A. The challenge of emotionalism and romanticism

B. The challenge of friendship and faithfulness

C. The challenge of life's meaning

D. The challenge of sexuality

IV. Singleness for whom?

Suggested Readings:

Christine Colón & Bonnie Field. *Singled Out* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009)

Barry Danylak. *Redeeming Singleness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010)

Stanley Hauerwas. *Sex in Public* in *Hauerwas Reader* (Durham, NC: Durham University Press, 2001)

Wesley Hill. *Spiritual Friendship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2015)

Paul Wadell. *Becoming Friends* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2002)

Lauren Winner. *Real Sex* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005)