

THE POSITIVES OF BEING CHRISTIAN WHILE SINGLE

Summary

A greater purpose and direction in life with increased well-being, through greater social support and release from societal pressures.

Single adults described the positives of being a Christian compared to their non-Christian friends as having:

- Relationship with God
- A greater purpose and direction in life
- Relatively increased well-being
- Community aspects of the Church family
- Release from various pressures facing those not professing a Christian faith
- Christian friendship and its values

Overview

People were invited to respond to the invitation: **Describe the positives for you in day-to-day life as a Christian single person, as compared to life for your non-Christian single friends. Please be as specific as you can.** 1,244 did so. All were read through and a random sample of 240 was taken and detail (the last 20 in each hundred comments) as the answers were consistent in the areas covered. Extracted quotes come from the complete collection of comments.

Of these, 17 made no specific answer to the question or raised a question about it and 45 interpreted the question as asking about the positives of being single without mentioning the Christian aspect.

A further 10 thought there were no differences and 12 that being a Christian and single was worse, mostly on the grounds that relationships and/or sex were more difficult. This meant that 1 in 9 thought there was no difference or it was worse being a Christian while single.

- *You just feel at the outside looking in with the church - just seeing couples and their families. Everyone is so insular minding their own business. I don't feel that way when I'm at work at all or with my non-Christian friends. (797)*
- *I really struggle with this one. I see my non-Christian friends in relationships, with children as single parents. they may not have lived life the biblical way, but God seems to have blessed them in ways that I have never been blessed. It can be very difficult to find the positives in daily life. Maybe my positives will come in eternity. (793)*

- *I cant think of any. I find it odd that when a married woman goes into hospital, people from church support her and her husband with offers of meals etc while she is in. As a singleton I got absolutely nothing, there seems to be an assumption we can manage because we are used to it! (896)*
- *I can't think of any. Easier to be single in the non-Christian world as more dating opportunities with non Christians (1240)*

The remaining 65% described the positives that the questions was seeking to elicit. Many of them also had a 'Yes, but...' attached, but the positive parts have been analysed and summarised. They covered six areas (in order of most mentioned):

- Relationship with God
- A greater purpose and direction in life
- Relatively increased well-being
- Community aspects of the Church family
- Release from various pressures facing those not professing a Christian faith
- Christian friendship and its values

Each is considered in turn.

A relationship with God

God and a relationship with God was described in a number of ways:

- Knowing or 'having' God (23% - percentages of those being analysed)
 - *My friends will sometimes say that they are very lonely. I find that as a Christian single person, I know that I am not alone as I have Jesus with me wherever I go. I have found a lot of peace by listening to the song "What A Friend I've Found" over and over again. As a Christian, I know that I am never alone and there is always someone with me, whereas, I find my non- Christian single friends struggle as they do not know Jesus as their Saviour (1097)*
 - *I feel that whereas they may feel they're missing something in their lives, I have God there for me who is my support and encouragement - I don't need that from a man. (259)*
 - *I have Christ in my life to help me and my non-Christian friends don't. (1131)*
 - *Knowing that I have God who can help me when things get too much for me. I also know that by abiding by God's rules, which are there for my protection, he has the best for me. (1089)*
- God as having 'a plan for my life', God is in control (17%)
 - *I believe that God has a plan for my life so I'm more positive about being Sep 20, 2012 9:47 AM single and having a future being single than non-christian friends. (19)*

- *I have utter faith that God has a plan for me and it is good whether that involves being in a relationship or not. My present and future are not dependent on meeting someone. I don't dwell in it. I always have the companionship of Jesus so I'm never lonely even if alone. (125)*
- *Knowing that being single isn't the end of the world that there is more to life and knowing that God does have a plan for my life (212)*
- *I know I am not alone in the day to day difficulties of modern living because of Jesus in my life. I know that God has a plan and a purpose for my life. (276)*
- *Having peace and reassurance that God is with me, walking with me, listening to my prayers and unveiling his plan for my life. Whereas my non Christian friends lack a lot of peace in this area (472)*
- *Having a certain amount of faith and trust that God is in control and knows best. (782)*
- God as providing hope, a future and acting as guide (12%)
 - *The enduring hope of a life lived with God. Trust that God has a plan for me and that He knows what is best for me. (478)*
 - *I know that God has plans for me. He is my hope and my rock and I know he will get me through everything that life throws at me! (105)*
 - *I wake up in the morning thanking God for another day, the ways I can serve him, knowing whatever I strengthens me. Knowing Christ is with me constantly, I can call upon him in any situation and he is there to guide me. (788)*
- Relating to, talking to, feeling God's presence (12%)
 - *I have God to talk to and trust (584)*
 - *I do get lonely, but I have the gift of being able to talk to God about my day and have a close relationship with Him. (46)*
 - *I think I recognise that I am happy to be alone because I have God in my life and my single non-Christian friends seem to noticeably have that void. I think as a Christian we never really feel alone and sometimes the company of God is better than a person. (550)*
- God as security, safety net, protector (4%)
 - *Even when I feel the most lonely, I know that I am not completely alone. I know that God is always with me and the Angels are always watching over me and my son. I get great comfort from that and non-Christian single friends do not have that comfort. (107)*
 - *I can trust him completely even when things are bad and sometimes they seem very bad. My life is in his hands, I am completely safe in him. (256)*
 - *My faith gives me hope and security for the future whatever happens. (188)*

- God as healer, providing forgiveness (2%)
 - *When I'm going through a rough patch I know God is always there for me and other Christians are around to talk to as well. I know God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (1192)*

Purpose and direction in life

Having a purpose and direction in life (12%)

- *... my Christian faith provides a sense of mission and purpose to my life that is not dependent on my relationship status. This gives a wonderful sense of freedom and empowerment that I think people outside of the Church often miss in their lives. (989)*
- *Knowing God is always there Knowing my life still has purpose and direction even though I'm not in the place I'd like to be in terms of a relationship Less pressure from friends to just go out and meet anyone (496)*

Greater well-being

There were many comments about a relative greater perceived well-being:

- Contentment and peace (5%)
 - *My relationship with God gives me a joy and contentment that they do not have, and provides me with an inner strength. (290)*
 - *I was brought up with a faith. Through discussion with friends who do not have any Christian or other faith I feel that are not so content with life as I am . However, I am never in conflict with them, they accept me and my faith for what I am. (119)*
- Comfort (5%)
 - *God is my Helper and comfort in ways that friends cannot be. I don't know how non-Christians cope. (383)*
 - *I am often lonely but never alone - God is always there and that is a comfort. (410)*
 - *I feel god comforts me when i feel down, i feel my life still has a purpose, I don't complain as much as those who do not believe in god, I feel things can be resolved in a space of one day, I feel God is a God of miracles (651)*
- Self-esteem and confidence (4%)
 - *Unlike my non-single Christian friends, my hoped-for future fulfilment is not ENTIRELY based on than theirs. I'd say it affects my self-esteem a little bit less than theirs, because my identity is not in my singleness entirely, it's in who I am as a child of God. (370)*

- *I believe that because I believe an absolute God of truth who is unshakeable and not relative, it provides me with a core of confidence which means i don't need to seek solace in material wealth, past events, or trial customs. (252)*
- *I got on with my life as best as I can.....I have sufficient self confidence to tackle the negatives of being single. Which allows me to concentrate on the positives, (275)*
- *I think knowing God gives you confidence and a feeling of peace so I do not feel that I desperately need to meet someone. (1129)*
- More positive, happy and joyful (3%)
 - *I have a sense of purpose and can always find a positive moment to boost me along. Non-christian women tend to need other people to make them happy. (558)*
 - *My single non Christian friends seems needy, unhappy and unfilled because they do not have a partner. While I am happy with and enjoying and embracing my Singleness (155)*
- Less stress and anxiety and better able to deal with situations (3%)
 - *Less stress No worries about unwanted pregnancies or STDs. No stress about having sex with someone and then splitting up (183)*

And other comments made:

- Inner strength, knowing my identity, trust in future, thankfulness, fulfilment.

Church family as community

The church family was valued because of its:

- Support (including through prayer and practical action in DIY) (18%)
 - *Church community for practical, emotional and spiritual support (265)*
 - *I do have wonderful Christian friends who really support me in life and ministry and that is a huge comfort and encouragement to me. I don't know how i would cope without them. I would struggle much more as a non- Christian single person as i don't think i would have my Christian community and so not have as many meaningful relationships. (382)*
 - *I have fellowship and a social life of sorts with people I've met through church. I get guidance on how to live. Non christians don't have these things in the same way. (584)*
- Wide spectrum of age groups and backgrounds (3%)

These were considered a real asset when compared with the lives of those not professing a Christian faith.

- *There is always a great christian community wherever I move to and they embrace me almost like a family member. It would be so difficult to move to a new place if I didn't have such christian communities and church families. (809)*
- *I've got a community of friends around me, who are a really mixed group - from older married couples to younger families with young kids, and other singles my age and younger. I don't think many non-Christians have such a wide and varied friendship group, it's like being part of a big family. (1099)*

Release from societal pressures

Christian singles observing their single friends appeared to be thankful that they were released from the pressure of sex in relationships (11%) and of having to be in a relationship (4%). Others commented on the freedom from society's expectations of shopping and drinks/drugs culture.

- *Most people my age in my area that are non Christians spend most weekends in the pub drinking or taking drugs. I am happy that I am not pulled to this. It's a very messy lifestyle and they are wasting their time and money (93)*
- *Less stress No worries about unwanted pregnancies or STDs. No stress about having sex with someone and then splitting up. God's in control so more peace. Not having to sleep and live with someone while they try you out. (183)*
- *Not damaging myself with alcohol, drugs, partying (816)*

Christian friends

Christian friends were mentioned by 9% and considered important as being different to their non-Christian friends in being free from some of the societal pressures.

- *I have a community to which I belong, which has members of all ages, backgrounds and circumstances. I have friends and mature Christians who pray for me and look out for me as I do them. (64)*
- *There is support that comes from having good friends at church who can pray through things that are difficult in terms of being single. People tend to be encouraging if I speak to them about it. (1163)*
- *I think that the relationships I have with my single Christian friends are much closer than they would be between non-Christians. (1160)*