

Divorce Recovery: Providing a Spiritual Covering

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I. Introduction

II. Why is Divorce Recovery Necessary?

- a) Divorce statistics:
 - i) 40+% Divorce Rate (*reference: Barna, Others*)
 - ii) 95% Divorce Remarry (*reference: CI, Others*)
 - iii) Divorce Rate in Church Same as Secular (*reference: Barna*)
- b) Change Current Paradigm:
 - i) Not Ready for Singles Group
 - ii) Full Healing Takes Months, Even Years
 - iii) Sundays Alone Aren't Enough
 - iv) Divorce "Stigma"
- c) Evangelistic Ministry Bridge to Community
- d) Few, if any, Community Divorce Recovery Groups
- e) Spiritual Opportunity: Pain is Spiritually Invigorating
 - i) Isaiah 61:1
 - ii) Corinthians 1:3-4;
- f) Heidi's Poem "*In the Midst...*"

III. What is Divorce Recovery Ministry?

- a) Small group, personal ministry
 - i) An Opportunity to "tell our story"
 - ii) A sanctuary to heal, encourage and provide hope
 - iii) Confidential environment;
 - iv) Discipleship Opportunity
- b) Typical Year-long Curriculum:
 - i) DivorceCare; (reference)
 - (a) Christ-Centered; Biblically Based
 - (b) Confidential, Safe, Trusting Sanctuary Where Participants:
 - (i) Find Help
 - (ii) Discover Hope
 - (iii) Experience Healing
 - (c) 13-15 weeks
 - (d) Instructional DVDs utilizing Christian counselors
 - (e) Support-group Discussion
 - (f) Suggested Resources:
 - (i) Counseling assistance
 - (ii) Internet
 - ii) Boundaries: (reference)
 - iii) Safe People: (reference)

IV. Divorce Issues - Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Impact:

- a) One of life's most painful experiences
- b) Physical and Emotional Impacts:
 - i) Disconnectedness and Numbness
 - ii) Erratic, Unpredictable Recovery
 - iii) Loss of Energy
 - iv) Grief Process
- c) Spiritual Impact:
 - i) Question God – Why?
 - ii) Moral values threatened
 - iii) Spiritual cross-road

V. Divorce Issues - Anger:

- a) Sources include:
 - i) Rejection
 - ii) Fear and insecurity
 - iii) Loneliness
 - iv) Pride
- b) Healthy ways to Deal with Anger:
 - i) Assertive Approach
 - ii) Dropping it

VI. Divorce Issues - Depression:

- a) Symptoms:
 - i) “Unconnectedness”
 - ii) Profound sense of Sadness, Loss
 - iii) Hopelessness, Pessimism
 - iv) Sleep Routine Disturbed
 - v) Change in eating habits
- b) Ways to Overcome:
 - i) Taking care of yourself
 - ii) Find an accountability partner
 - iii) Get Active
 - iv) Catch the Negative Thoughts
 - v) Professional help
 - vi) Forgiveness

VII. Divorce Issues - Loneliness:

- a) Causes:
 - i) Isolation
 - ii) Rejection
 - iii) Couples-oriented Society
 - iv) Friends and Family:
- b) Consequences:
 - i) Anger and Depression
 - ii) Promiscuity

- iii) Erosion of Self-Esteem
- iv) Rebound relationships
- c) Cures:
 - i) Learn to be Separate, Unique and Whole
 - ii) Learn the difference between alone and lonely
 - iii) Same Sex Friends

VIII. Divorce Issues – New Relations

- a) Divorce recovery take time – 1 year heal for every 4 years of marriage
- b) Illusions leading to New Relationships:
- c) Why Remarriages Fail:
 - i) Moved too quickly (rebound)
 - ii) Children
 - iii) Decline in moral value
 - iv) Pornography
- d) Appropriate Time for New Relationships:
 - i) Living more in present than past
 - ii) Not looking for nurture or rescue
 - iii) Learn to live alone and not be lonely
 - iv) Development of the Most Important Relationship

IX. Divorce Issues – Kids:

- a) Expected Emotional Responses:
 - i) Anxiety
 - ii) Anger
 - iii) Depression
 - iv) Low Self-esteem
 - v) Guilt
- b) Mistakes Parents Make:
 - i) Critical of Ex-spouse
 - ii) Using children as Spies
 - iii) Restricting access to other parent
 - iv) Making changes too fast
 - v) Loss of structure
 - vi) Using children as confidants
- c) Non-Custodial Parent Roles:
 - i) Be involved in their lives
 - ii) Don't Ever Give Up
 - iii) Develop and live a life based on Christ Jesus

X. Divorce Issues – Forgiveness:

- a) Consequences of Unforgiveness:
 - i) Depression
 - ii) Bitterness and Negativity
 - iii) Loneliness
- b) What Forgiveness is NOT:

- i) A feeling; it's a decision
- ii) Minimize the offense
- iii) Condone the other person's behavior
- iv) Trusting the other person
- c) Benefits of Forgiveness:
 - i) Freedom to move on
 - ii) Healing
 - iii) Antidote for resentment and anger
 - iv) Divorce no longer has power over them

XI. Divorce Issues – Others:

- a) Budget and financial strategies
- b) Dealing with single sexuality
- c) Reconciliation:

XII. When to Consider a Divorce Recovery Ministry

- a) When the Church is Approached by the Community
- b) When the Church sees Increased Instance of Divorce Impact
- c) When the Church is Gifted by the Holy Spirit, Evidenced by:
 - i) Church and Counsel Support
 - ii) Feeling called by God to Start the Ministry
 - iii) Existing Facilitators/Leaders
 - iv) Financial Support

XIII. Who Should Facilitate?

- a) Professed Personal Relationship with Christ Jesus
- b) Demonstrated Spiritual Maturity
- c) Compassionate Encourager
- d) Shepherds and Intercessors
- e) Respected and Effective Communicators
- f) Best Choice: Husband-Wife Team Who Have Experience and Recovered from Divorce Blending

XIV. Where Should Divorce Recovery Occur?

- a) Group Size: 4 to 10
- b) Expect 1.5-2 hour length
- c) Warm, comfortable, private, secure environment free of distractions
- d) TV and DVD/VCR required
- e) Home of the facilitators (Be cautious of this for women living alone)
- f) Other home-like rooms
- g) Other Issues to Consider:
 - i) Refreshments
 - ii) Name tags
 - iii) Parking
 - iv) Childcare