

## Soul(mate) Searching

I'm almost twenty-five, out of school and joining the "real world"—whatever that means. To the shock and disappointment of my proper, southern family, neighbors and friends I did not graduate with a MRS degree. There was no dainty diamond ring adorning my finger by spring. I did not spend my last spring semester in college planning my wedding as some of my girlfriends did. I was always told that in college I would find my Mr. Right, but it just didn't happen for me. Sure, I dated a few guys, had my heart broken and I even thought at one point that I might have found the man I would spend the rest of my life with. However, I was not ready to pledge anyone my faith till death do us part. Now, as a busy, working gal I have been warned that finding a good marrying-type man in the "real world" will be a challenge. So, where does a twenty or thirty something woman find a decent man?

First a disclaimer on my behalf: I am happily single for the moment, but being happily single doesn't mean that I can't have my eyes and heart looking for the man of my dreams. No harm in being on the watch and preparing myself to be someone's wedded wife; however finding my husband does not preoccupy the center of my daily life, though one day I would like to get married. And since college I've met people at bars, running, on public transportation and through friends of friends, but nothing has ever seemed to work out quite right. Something seemed to always be missing. Don't get me wrong; I met some handsome, intelligent, fetching young men, but there was always something that didn't fully click between the two of us. Then I found myself going to church looking around for eligible bachelors. Is it wrong to scan the church-going men for a potential mate? I don't think so; actually I think it is a great place for women and men to meet as long as church isn't merely used as a free version of eHarmony. While Church is for the worship of God, is it wrong to meet other singles at church who are passionate about God too? After all isn't God supposed to be at the center of a couple's life?

I don't know why this didn't occur to me sooner. There is always a grandmother or mother who wants to set me up with a grandson or son every time I go back home to my mom's small country church in South Carolina. Church has always been the center of worship as well as community. It is where I met some of my closest friends in high school and college. It's where I met my first boyfriend in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. If that childhood song is true and church is more than a building and church is a people, then I want to find another church person to be with me, a church person. So, single ladies and gentlemen don't feel bad if you go to church gussied up in Sunday dress and find yourself scanning the congregation for that special somebody. You never know who may sit in the pew next to you. Maybe next week I'll tell you about the dashing young, single guy who sat next to me in a pew last November. But that is a much longer story, and probably the reason why I am an advocate of being open to a different kind of soul-searching at church.