

# AVOIDING ISOLATION

---

THE VALUE OF  
COMMUNITY AND  
CONNECTION



HYPHENONLINE.ORG

STARTING  
HYPHENS  
STARTING  
HYPHENS  
STARTING  
HYPHENS

Friendships are fleeting and statistics show us that in the average American, close personal friendships are typically built with only a handful of people in their early adult years. Often any one person's best friend is quite literally a computer-generated dorm roommate.

- By and large, the reported average amount of friendships held by any one person lies somewhere around 16 friends.
- These friends vary drastically in their level of friendship.
- Those polled only reported 1 or 2 of these 16 to be true close friends.
- Many claimed they would not consider hanging out, one-on-one, with the rest.
- This number plateaus and often decreases with age.

Lack of friendship and especially active, close friendships are integral in our development. A lack of friends unsurprisingly can lead to social, emotional, and spiritual stunting. This is why the church is so compelling as an organism of community, growth, support, and development. It has literally been built to sustain its people even when the world around it is chaotic and oppressive of everyone and everything else.

The church and the body within it is a support system like nothing the world has seen before its founding or since.

*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*

*1 Corinthians 12:12-20*



These relationships within this room are not just important, they are dire and necessary beyond what we could imagine. The potential for growth as a group of twenty or thirty or forty is unimaginable in the scope of understanding what the early church was capable of as a unified body.

- Lydia was a profound businesswoman with considerable power and authority in Thyatira. Her cohort of textilers, dyers, and garment makers, all fellow believers had the power to grind the city to a halt if they had seen fit due to their influence within the thriving European marketplace.

- Cornelius the Centurion was a governor of sorts running a wealthy household and commanded great authority in Rome and with the roman community. His support of the church and his fellow believers helped to ground the church in what was a predominantly roman world.

- The story of Acts and the Epistles is one of the Gospel certainly, but it also reveals a web of believers that spanned the known world in such a way that means they probably didn't avoid the other family in skirts at Walmart when they passed by them.

Isolation is never the answer.

*Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." 3 Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.*

*4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." 5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree.*

*1 Kings 19:1-5*



The prophet was anointed, righteous, powerful, and chosen of God, but in spite of all of that, the enemy was successful in isolating him and causing Elijah to flee from the plan of God and succumb to crippling fear and doubt.

Elijah had just experienced great victory. He had seen the miracle of the fire descending from Heaven, yet he still thought himself a failure.

Elijah was in the perfect Will of God and still managed to find himself in what he considered a hopeless situation. It was only by the miraculous work of God through a display of His power and His promise that Elijah's spirit was revived and He was encouraged enough to take the next step.

- We can be in the right church, at the right job, with the right person and still find ourselves feeling lonely, isolated, and lost.
- We need the support of believers around us to pull us up from these dark places and support us until we find the strength to stand on our own again.
- Feeling lost and alone is a very real part of the journey that we are on, but we must be aware that we are on this journey together.

