

Discussion Questions

September 17, 2023



Created for Community

1. James began by talking about the recent report by the Surgeon General on the epidemic of Loneliness today. The report said loneliness is more harmful to our health than smoking 16 cigarettes a day or even obesity.

- Do you resonate with that report and its finding? Did any of it seem surprising to you? (If you have the time, read the highlights of the report found in the sermon notes)
- Discuss the impact that loneliness or isolation have had on you & your family over the last few years.
- In what ways can we feel lonely even while among other people?

2. Read Romans 12:4-9

- Summarize this passage in your own words.
- How does Paul emphasize both the diversity of the body and its mutuality (or dependence on one another) in this passage?
- In verse 5, what does it mean for the parts of the body to be "part of one another/belong to each?"

3. In Romans 12:9, Paul says we are to not be fake in how we love one another. (Also translated as "don't love with hypocrisy," or "let your love be genuine.")

- In what ways are we as Christians prone to be "fake?"
- What does it look like for a church community to be genuine, real and sincere in how we love?

4. Read the following quote from Heather Kopp in her book, *Sober Mercies*, discussing the difference between environments that cultivate fear, conformity and performance versus those that cultivate safety, vulnerability and healing:

"when folks gather around a system of shared beliefs, the price of acceptance in the group is usually agreement which means the greatest value stated or not is being right. Unfortunately this often creates an atmosphere of fear and performance which in turn invites conformity. But when people gather around a shared need for healing the price of acceptance from the group is usually vulnerability which means the greatest value stated or not is being real. This tends to foster an atmosphere of safety and participation which in turn invites community even if you have questions and doubts."

- Discuss this quote. In what ways do you agree or disagree?
- In what ways are we prone as Christian communities to cultivate unhealthy conformity/fear/performance?

5. Discuss how well your group is doing in fostering safety, being known and vulnerability within our community groups. Any ways this can be improved?

Romans 12:3 -13 (NLT)

Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

Northview Core Values:

Spend Time With God

Become Like Jesus

Connect in Community

Live Generously

Reach the lost

Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation

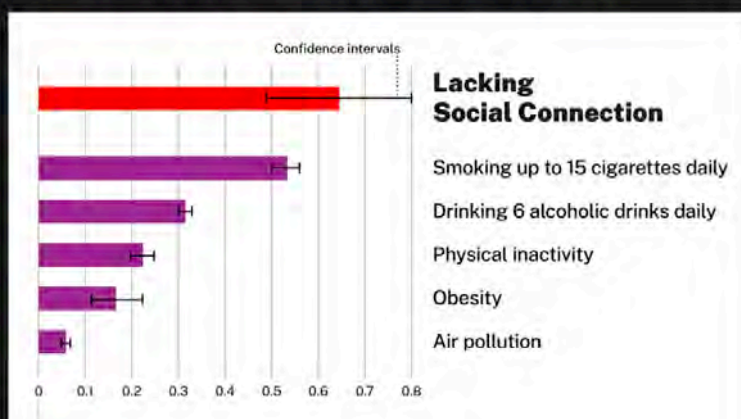


2023

The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the
Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community

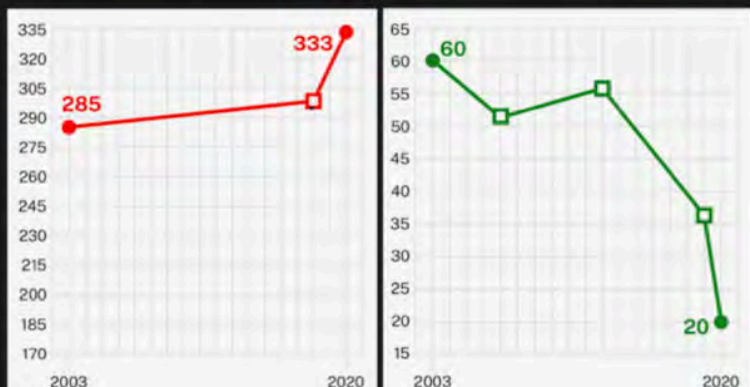


Lacking social connection is as dangerous as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.



National Trends for Social Connection

From 2003 to 2020, time spent alone increased, while time spent on in-person social engagement decreased.



Surgeon General Report key points:

"..Loneliness is more widespread today than any other major health issue in the United States"

"Loneliness is misunderstood... There is a stigma associated with loneliness... many people struggle but don't talk about it and have trouble admitting to themselves that they're lonely.

"Most people think loneliness is a feeling and haven't considered that it also has physical components to it. The mortality impact of loneliness is... in fact, greater than the mortality impact of obesity or sedentary living... the issues we focus on so often in public health"

"Loneliness can throw you into a cycle. The paradox is that people who are lonely don't want others to think something's wrong with them. So they further isolate themselves... When we struggle with a problem that we can't share, it further isolates."

"There is a difference in solitude and loneliness. Solitude—being alone or isolated—is about being physically alone; it's an objective phenomenon, based on the number of people around you... but loneliness is a subjective term about how you feel about your connection. I might have one person around me but not feel lonely at all because I feel a deep connection to myself and that person. Or I could have one hundred people around me and feel profoundly lonely which happens to many

people. We could ensure that people are interacting with others all day long, but that doesn't mean we will reduce loneliness."

"Media connections are not necessarily the same as deeper connections... There can be an assumption that because you're virtually connected through social media, email or text that somehow that protects you from loneliness. Sometimes it can, but not always... What matters when it comes to loneliness is the quality of your connections with people. Technology can sometimes be a quality connection, and sometimes it can detract from quality connection. It can lead us to substitute lower quality interactions from what used to be higher quality in-person interactions. The kind of conversations you have via text are different qualitatively from the conversations you have in person or on the phone when you can hear someone's voice and understand their tone, feelings and intentions."

"the antidote to this crisis is a need to rebuild the social fabric of this country through social connections"

"That doesn't mean you have to divulge every aspect of your life. What it does mean is that we acknowledge when we come to work, that we come as a whole person, not just as a skill set, but as human beings who have concerns, worries, joys and a whole life outside work. When we can show up more fully as those people and share those dimensions of our lives with each other, we can strengthen connections."














Genesis 2:18 (NLT)


Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him."

Acts 2:46–47 (NIV)


Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.








**Big Basin Redwoods State Park**
January 14, 2020 · 🌲

Did you know?



Redwood tree roots are more shallow than you may think for such an enormous tree. There is no tap root to anchor them deep into the earth. The roots are only 6-12 feet deep, and yet, these trees rarely fall over. Withstanding winds, fires, storms, earthquakes and prolonged flooding, how can something up to 500 tons, reaching over 350 feet tall and living for many centuries remain standing with roots only going down about 10 feet?

Their root system is intertwined with the other redwood trees, literally holding each other up. The trees grow very close together and are dependent on each other for nutrients, as well. Only redwoods have the strength and ability to support other redwoods. These trees are literally preventing the adversity of life from knocking each other down. Just another reason Redwoods are awesome! 🌲 🌲 🌲 [See less](#)



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