This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_26\_\_\_\_. How are we already at episode 26! It feels like we just launched the show! Friend, We were made for relationship, but so often our relationships are broken. And when our relationships are broken, *we* are broken. One of our deepest human desires is to be known, but we often have lost ourselves along the way. This is a podcast to help you get your relationships back to a place of wholeness. A place of authentic connection, where you feel truly known.

So come on in and sit a while. Let’s exchange fear for love and finally see what good relationships are made of.

The word community is tossed around quite a bit in the church world and modern Christian culture. So often that I am not even sure we know what we mean anymore when we say it, and sometimes it kind of sounds annoying, ha! But it is a concept that is foundational to the Christian faith. We aren’t meant to live life alone, but in community with others. We aren’t meant to live the FAITH life alone, but in community. It is essential. Vital for the believer.

In our individualized western culture, we don’t seem to value community like other cultures do around the world. We value self- my, myself, and mine. And we become so centered on it that we neglect other relationships with believers. We tend to think that we don’t need others, maybe we want our faith to be private, maybe we want no one to know what we struggle with. We pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, if you will, and just learn to deal with things on our own.

But our marriages are dying because no one in our life knows about it.

We are battling depression alone because we won’t invite anyone into our lives.

We are lonely because we don’t initiate with others.

We are in a constant cycle of sin because we don’t confess it to others.

We aren’t sure where we fit or if we have a purpose because we are not serving.

We don’t learn new things about God or scripture because we think we can just teach ourselves what we need to know.

We suffer when we are not in good community. And let me clarify something really quickly— when I speak of community, I am speaking of Christian friends or family. I am not talking about friends outside of this group in this conversation, and I’m not talking about physical proximity to one another, either. I believe we should befriend people from all backgrounds, but we need other Christians around us more. That’s just the truth of it. We are called the body of Christ, each individual an essential member of the body, relying on and needing one another in order to live for Jesus and do what he says. We can’t do this thing alone.

There have been seasons in my life where my Christian community — or if we can define it, the people who loved me, supported me, challenged me, served with me, and helped me grow— times when *this* has been so alive and thriving and full. And there have been times I’ve felt lonely, times when I have been actively involved in church but still did not feel like I had the community I craved. The church seems to teach that the “secret sauce” to finding good community is to join a small group or serve on a team, but honestly, small groups don’t always provide the deep friendships we long for and serving together does not always leave much time for getting to know one another. These things can help, but they don’t just magically provide the relationships we need and want. Ask me how I know.

What you won’t hear me give you today is a simple, fool-proof way to build your Christian community. Friend, I have gone to church since I was like two weeks old, and I have been actively involved for the most part since. I’ve followed all the rules and done what I was supposed to do, and I still have had seasons where my community felt non-existent. So I don’t honestly know the answer to the question “how can we build our community?”

But what I can share with you today is what often prevents better community and what happens when we don’t have a strong community around us. I know what’s it’s like to feel alone in the church, especially in leadership (but that’s another topic for another day).

So what prevents us from having the community we long for, the Acts 2 type of community, the Jesus and his disciples type of community?

 **Busyness**

 We are a busy people, and I’ve used this excuse more often than not when presented with an opportunity to spend more time with others or join a small group or serve. We are busy. We have jobs and sometimes we have kids on top of jobs, and honestly, we don’t have much margin in our schedules anymore to connect with other believers. Maybe we could allow more white space in our lives for things that matter more than that show on Netflix or a sink without dishes. Maybe we could prioritize others (whether in an online community or our in-person Christian friends). Our calendar is a picture of our priorities. Preaching to myself here.

 **Fear**

 Making friends and investing time and energy and even our resources into these relationships can be scary. I know for us, nearly every time we’ve made close friends in New Orleans, they have moved away. So now that fear is so real as we try to rebuild and make new friends. Will it be worth it? Will we invest only to say goodbye in a couple of years? We wonder if it’s even worth it. People also fear getting close to people— maybe because we are scared of hurt or rejection or betrayal. Maybe we are afraid of people knowing us *too* well and feeling exposed. Maybe we are afraid of letting them down because we know we can’t hang out as often as we would life. Maybe we have been burned by other Christians before (maybe more than once), and we aren’t sure If these are relationships we want anymore. This Fear keeps us chained up in the corner, alone.

 **Lack of initiation**

 This is my problem, for sure. I wait on others to initiate with me— to ask me how I’m doing, to ask me to hang out, to invite me into their group. If that invitation never comes, then I easily fade into the background because 9 times out of 10, I am not the initiator. But we can’t meet people and develop relationships without stepping out and being brave and saying hi first or asking someone to go to coffee or joining the small group. We will always stay exactly where we are.

What happens when we don’t have great Christian community?

 **A constant feeling of loneliness, of feeling like we don’t fit or belong.**

 **More struggles with sin** (due to the lack of accountability and confession. Secret sin only stays secret. But brought to the light with safe others? Well only then can it be healed)

 **Greater mental health concerns** (like higher severity of depression, anxiety, and other issues)

 **A lack of purpose and direction because you wander aimlessly.** You don’t understand the mission and calling of every believer, not fully at least. Because we cannot understand it all without a full picture of what the body of Christ looks like- one body, many parts. Every member having its own function, gift, call. Every member essential to sharing the hope of the Savior. It’s in community that we see more clearly what God has specifically asked each of us separately to do because we see what He asks us to do together.

 **We are unable to live as God intended because he intended** for us to live in community with other believers, helping one another, being kind and gracious to one another, loving one another, forgiving one another, doing mission together. If we aren’t surrounded by people like this, then it’s impossible to live a life that pleases God.

 **We can have distorted beliefs.** When there is no discipleship, no cohesiveness in our belief system and theology, then man, we can believe all kinds of whack stuff. We need others to help us shape our beliefs and understand scripture more accurately.

Community is vital to whole living. And though in the past several years, I haven’t had much of my own, I still know that I must have it. Like oxygen. I have to have it. And so do you, my friend.

Enter music—

I will end today reading from the book of Romans, chapter 12.

“For as in one body we have many members,

And all the members do not have the same function,

So we, though many, are one body in Christ,

And individually members one of another.

Having gifts the differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them…”

It goes on in vs. 9,

“Let love be genuine;

Hate what is evil,

Hold fast to what is good;

Love one another with brotherly affection;

Outdo one another in showing honor.

Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord.

Rejoice in your hope,

Be patient in tribulation,

Be constant in prayer.

Contribute to the needs of the saints,

Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you;

Bless and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice.

Weep with those who weep.

Live in harmony with one another;

Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly;

Never be conceited.

Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.

If possible, so far as it depends upon you,

Live peaceably with all.”

Thanks for sitting a while with me. I trust that understanding the value of community will help you take a step toward wholeness so that you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

You can find me on instagram @kerrahfabacher or at my website, [www.kerrahfabacher.com](http://www.kerrahfabacher.com).

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The transcript for this episode is on the podcast page on my website.

And a big thanks to my friend, Robert Hargrove, for creating the music for our podcast, and fellow hope\*writer, Alana Dawson for editing the show.

Until next time, friend.

I’ll see you soon! —Finish with last couple seconds of music