

The background of the slide is a light gray gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The main title is centered in the upper half of the slide.

THE EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS—A CALL FOR THE CHURCH

LONELINESS CAN BE DEFINED AS A SENSE OF NOT BELONGING OR
HAVING MEANINGFUL CONNECTION, AND CAN TAKE MANY FORMS.

SELECTED SOURCES

- [HTTPS://WWW.HARVARDMAGAZINE.COM/2021/01/FEATURE-THE-LONELINESS-PANDEMIC](https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2021/01/feature-the-loneliness-pandemic)
- [HTTPS://WWW.NCBI.NLM.NIH.GOV/PMC/ARTICLES/PMC6125010/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6125010/)
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- [HTTPS://WWW.THEGOSPELCOALITION.ORG/ARTICLE/CHURCH-RESPOND-LONELINESS-EPIDEMIC/](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/church-respond-loneliness-epidemic/)
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- [HTTPS://RESEARCH.LIFEWAY.COM/2020/01/21/3-OVERLOOKED-SYMPTOMS-OF-LONELINESS-IN-THE-CHURCH/](https://research.lifeway.com/2020/01/21/3-overlooked-symptoms-of-loneliness-in-the-church/)

HARVARD UNIVERSITY STUDY

- 36% OF AMERICANS INCLUDING 61% OF YOUNG ADULTS (COMPARED TO 24% OF THOSE AGED 55-65) AND 51% OF MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN FEEL “SERIOUS LONELINESS”
- LONELINESS IS LINKED TO EARLY MORTALITY AND AN ARRAY OF SERIOUS PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS
- VARIOUS FACTORS HAVE ERODED THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THIS COUNTRY FOR DECADES, AND RECENT EVENTS HAVE ACCELERATED THOSE FACTORS



SOME SYMPTOMS OF LONELINESS IN THE CHURCH

- ISOLATED OR DETACHED (PERSON IS AROUND A LOT AND NOT REALLY INVOLVED)
- WITHDRAWAL BECAUSE DEPRESSION OR OTHER EMOTIONAL STRESS OR DISTRESS DRAINS PHYSICAL ENERGY
- HYPER-INVOLVEMENT (AT ALL THE THINGS, WORKING HARD, LEAVES FEELING UNFULFILLED)

(FROM LIFEWAY RESEARCH)



WHAT CAN WE DO?

- THIS ISN'T A "PROBLEM" TO BE FIXED, IT DOES NEED AWARENESS AND FOCUS
- LIKE A LOT OF ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IT NEEDS A WAY OF BEING AND THINKING MORE THAN A "PROGRAM" TO ADDRESS IT
- "COMPASSION IS AN ANTIDOTE FOR LONELINESS" (LIFEWAY RESEARCH)
 - FOLLOW UP ON CHECKING IN ON PEOPLE
 - INVITE YOUNG ADULTS AND NEW MEMBERS TO SOCIAL EVENTS, CREATE LOTS OF OCCASIONS FOR INFORMAL SHARING AND CONNECTION BUILDING (HOLIDAY AND AGE SPECIFIC EVENTS AS EXAMPLES) (RESEARCH SHOWS FRIENDSHIP AND CONNECTION REQUIRE FREQUENT AND REGULAR INTERACTION)
 - SMALL FAITH GROUPS ARE IMPORTANT, ALTHOUGH NOT THE ONLY ANSWER
 - GROW LEADERSHIP, SHARED LEADERSHIP MEANS LESS LONELY LEADERS
 - TEACH POSITIVELY ABOUT THE NATURE OF FRIENDSHIP AND COMMUNITY—JESUS IS PRIME EXAMPLE OF DOING EVERYTHING IN COMMUNITY

PSALM 133

ECCE, QUAM BONUM!

1 OH, HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS, *
WHEN BRETHREN LIVE TOGETHER IN UNITY!

2 IT IS LIKE FINE OIL UPON THE HEAD *
THAT RUNS DOWN UPON THE BEARD,

3 UPON THE BEARD OF AARON, *
AND RUNS DOWN UPON THE COLLAR OF HIS ROBE.

4 IT IS LIKE THE DEW OF HERMON *
THAT FALLS UPON THE HILLS OF ZION.

5 FOR THERE THE LORD HAS ORDAINED THE BLESSING: *
LIFE FOR EVERMORE.