

**Alone Together: Why America Is Drowning in Loneliness** by Brad Harrub, Ph.D.

*Continued from page 1...* 2. Families are fracturing: Parents are physically present but emotionally absent—scrolling instead of shepherding. Children are being raised by screens instead of fathers and mothers. Kids feel alone in their own homes. God never intended children to be raised by devices. Deuteronomy 6 calls parents to teach diligently—at home, in the car, in every moment of life. That requires presence, not pixels.

3. Churches are losing their sense of family: Churches used to be spiritual families. They ate together. They shared burdens. They cried together. They rejoiced together. Now many congregations resemble movie theaters: people walk in, watch a service, and leave. No one knows their struggles. No one knows their victories. No one knows their wounds. Yet the first-century church “devoted themselves to fellowship” (Acts 2:42). We devote ourselves to convenience.

4. Addiction thrives in isolation: Pornography. Alcohol. Drugs. Gambling. These sins grow in the dark—when no one sees, no one asks, no one knows. Satan hunts lonely people. 1 Peter 5:8 describes him as a roaring lion—lions don’t attack the herd. They attack the isolated.

THE CHURCH’S OPPORTUNITY IN THIS CRISIS: This crisis, as dark as it is, offers the church an unprecedented opportunity: to be the one place in the world where people are not alone. 1. The church must fight isolation with community: Real community. Not superficial “How are you? Fine.” moments. But Acts 2 community—shared meals, shared life, shared burdens. People need a church family.

2. Men must lead by example: Every man needs: someone who asks the hard questions, someone who prays with him, someone who knows his weaknesses, someone who sharpens him, David had Jonathan. Paul had Barnabas and Timothy. Jesus sent disciples out two-by-two. You were not designed to stand alone.

3. Families must put down screens and pick up responsibilities: Fathers—your children need your eyes, your voice, your presence. Not just your paycheck. Not just your rules. Not just your Wi-Fi password. Real relationships cannot survive digital distractions. Turn the screens off. Talk. Pray. Laugh. Read Scripture. Play. Build memories—not media habits.

4. Christians must be ministry-minded again: You have no idea what the woman three pews in front of you is carrying. You have no idea what the man who arrives late and leaves early is facing. You have no idea what the teen sitting alone is battling. But you could— if you would ask. If you would listen. If you would lean in. Ministry is simple: See people. Know people. Love people.

Brushy church of Christ  
774 Hwy 48 South  
Centerville TN 37033



**The Brushy Beacon**  
“Let God’s Word Be Our Guide in 2025”  
**December 7, 2025**

9 a.m. Sunday Bible Class	<b>Elders</b>	<b>Deacons</b>
10 a.m. Sunday Morning Worship	Ricky Atkinson	Paul Johnston    Terry Banks
6 p.m. Sunday Evening Worship	James Atkinson	Justin Atkinson    Caleb Truett
7 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study	Tony Duncan	Kevin Johnston

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If you were to walk into any coffee shop, restaurant, or airport terminal in America, you would see something remarkable: crowds of people sitting close to one another—yet completely isolated. Heads down. Earbuds in. Eyes locked on a glowing screen. We are the most connected generation in history... and yet statistically the loneliest generation ever recorded. And sadly, at this time of year—around the holidays—this is felt even more by many. In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General declared an epidemic of loneliness, reporting that long-term isolation is as harmful to the body as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. And the numbers keep climbing.

But the most devastating part? This loneliness isn’t just weakening immune systems—it’s destroying souls. Let’s be honest, it affects people’s spiritual walk! HOW DID WE GET HERE? How did a nation with smartphones, social media, 24/7 entertainment, video calls, and endless technology wind up emotionally bankrupt? Simple: We replaced real relationships with digital ones. A generation ago, people talked face-to-face. Neighbors visited each other. Church members ate together. Men sharpened one another (Prov. 27:17). Families sat around the dinner table without screens. Now we have: 5,000 online “friends” but no one to call in a crisis, Couples eating dinner while staring at phones, Teenagers scrolling TikTok for hours but unable to hold a conversation

Men hiding depression because they have no close male friendships, Churches filled with people who worship together but don’t actually know each other, Technology hasn’t made us relational—it has made us distracted and detached. THE HIGH COST OF DISCONNECTED LIVES: Loneliness is not a “soft” problem. It is ravaging our culture. Here are some of the real symptoms we are seeing today: 1. Mental health is collapsing Studies show: Depression rates have tripled since 2019. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death for ages 15–34. Men account for 80% of suicide deaths Why? Because men don’t talk. Men don’t share. Men don’t connect. And Satan loves isolated men.

I’m teaching a men’s Bible class tomorrow about “Christian men finish well.” Too often that’s not the case. Scripture warns: “Woe to him who is alone when he falls” (Ecclesiastes 4:10). Continued on page 4...



# Family News & Notes

**Welcome** We are so glad you are here and welcome you to a time of Bible teaching and worship. We hope you will come and worship with us again!

**Fruit Baskets** We will be preparing fruit baskets on Thursday, Dec. 18, at 5 P.M. in the Ladies Classroom. There is a list of items needed on the table. There is also a list for you to add anyone you think would enjoy getting a basket. We will be glad to prepare one for the sick, a shut in, or even a new neighbor. Please see Pamela, or Amy if you have questions or would like to donate money for items.

**Christmas Caroling** We will meet at the Annex at 6 P.M. to eat pizza and go Christmas Caroling. If you plan to go caroling, please sign the sheet on the table. If you would like for us to come sing to you, please sign the sheet on the table! We appreciate Caleb & Paige for taking care of this.

**Prepare the Lord's Supper** There is a list on the bulletin board for those who wish to help prepare the Lord's Supper for 2026. If you are interested but have never done it before, see Kim Atkinson or Paige Truett for a recipe and instructions. It is a vital part of our worship and so deeply appreciated. Thanks to those who have been and are willing to help and serve in this way!

**Theme for 2026** Please write down your ideas and give them to Ricky Atkinson by Sun., Dec. 14.

**A Foundations of Faith Bible Class** Do you ever have spiritual and biblical questions? Are you looking to have a closer walk with God? We are looking for interest in starting a new Adult Bible Class on Sunday Mornings. If you would be interested in attending, please see Kevin Johnston. If there is enough interest, Kevin will begin teaching the class in January.

**Operation Christmas** We want to give a huge thanks to everyone who helped with Operation Santa. We were able to help 10 children in Hickman County ranging in age from 3 to 17. Everyone received much needed clothes, shoes, a book, a bible, and a toy. Your generosity was poured out upon these families! A big thanks to Devin & Gracie Johnston for heading this up!

**Our Deepest Sympathies...** to the family of Steve Winebrenner. Please keep his wife, Cindy, and their children, Jocelyn (Kerry) Clouse, Jacinda (Brad) Porter, and Josiah (Anastasia) Winebrenner in your prayers. He is the grandfather of Janaya (Brian) Corkin, Leland (Savannah) Porter, Emma (Byron) Tucker, Lynlee, Ansley, and Everleigh Porter. His funeral was last Monday, in Indiana.

...to the family of Junior Baker. He is the father of Cindy (Gregg) Johnston, April Baker, and Jill (Truman) Wrenne. His funeral will be on Thursday at 1:30p.m. at the McDonald Funeral Home in Centerville with visitation on Wednesday from 4 to 8 p.m.

**A Happy Birthday to...** Glenda Tanner...December 7

**A Happy Anniversary to...** Fred & Patricia Bowman...December 10

**THE GOSPEL SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO LONELINESS:** If there is one message lonely people need to hear, it is this: You are not forgotten. You are not unseen. You are not alone. Jesus said: "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20). "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). "Cast all your cares on Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). People need Jesus! The cure for loneliness is not more followers, more likes, or more notifications on social media. It is relationships grounded in Christ. We can show a lonely world what real love looks like. We can offer what screens never will. We can rebuild what culture has torn down. Because the church—when it acts like the church—is the most connected family on earth. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

# Pray for Those Sick Among Us...

**James & Helen Bryant** are recovering at home.

**Tony Duncan** is recovering after having ankle surgery.

**Elaine Jones.** sister of Louise Adams, is preparing to have surgery on December 19.

**Deborah Roberts** daughter of Glenda Tanner, is improving at home after surgery.

**Ted Claussen** is recovering after heart bypass surgery.

**Charlotte Holland** friend of Michelle Perkins, has been diagnosed with terminal cancer.

**Kim Pace** sister of Tammy Forrester, will have a double mastectomy on December 17.

**John Patterson** coworker of Justin Atkinson, had a heart attack and bypass surgery.

## Continuing Prayer Requests

Dealing with Cancer - Glen Herrington

Special Requests - Miranda Smith, Judy Goodman, Annis Womack, Karen Bowen, Vera Woods, Paul Johnston

## Pray for Those in Nursing Homes

Community Living Center in Murfreesboro... Fred Bowman

## Ongoing Prayer Reminders

- All in the military and civil workers overseas and their families right.
- All those Preaching and teaching the Good News all over the world.
- Our Government Leaders – Local, State, and National (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
- Our Elders and Deacons who oversee, care for, serve, and feed us spiritually. (Heb. 13:7)

**Peace Grows When We Surrender Our Anxiety** *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."* – Philippians 4:6 Peace does not come from avoiding problems but from handing them over to God in prayer. Gratitude helps calm the anxious heart and opens the door to God's peace. Make a habit of praying immediately when stress hits. Replace your anxious thoughts with thankful prayers.

## Upcoming Events

\*Wednesday, December 10 ~ Monthly Wednesday Fellowship Meal at 6 P.M. - Menu on Table

\*Thursday, December 18 ~ Fruit Baskets at 5 P.M. with Pizza & Caroling Afterwards at the Annex

## For the Record

Sunday Morning Bible Class	40	Sunday Morning Worship	58
Sunday Evening Worship	XX	Wednesday Evening	42
Contribution \$1956			