

Bible Conference 2026 GCBC:
Biblical Community and the Human Condition
Chadwick Hook

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Intro:

Have you ever found yourself staring at a wall in your cubicle at work or sitting at the dinner table with the family in the evening, twirling your noodles in the spaghetti bowl for the tenth time, and then suddenly it hit you: “I feel like something is missing, and sometimes I can feel alone in a crowd. I wonder who I can talk to about this? Is there something I can change so that I feel seen, heard, and needed?” Quite regularly, people are feeling more alone and out of touch with people. We tend to work hard and retreat to our little nook in the house where we find our solace, sheltered away from people and their nagging thoughts about our lives. But this compiles the struggle we all bear as we constantly fight a battle of wills where we have a general understanding of our need for community, but we desire the self-motivated actions that we assume will make us feel fulfilled in the moment, creating the result of depressive or separated behavior.

As believers who have grown up in church with biblical understanding, we know the concept of biblical fellowship or biblical community, but when fighting the struggles of day-to-day life, we find ourselves too tired to have dinner with a friend, take a phone call from that person who needs help but always drains you, or spend valuable evening time with the family God has given you. This has been a struggle for generations of people who have gone from polar opposites of “I’ll rest when I’m dead” to “take a self-care day, you deserve to treat yourself”. While both can come from a heart motivated by an honest desire to help others and oneself, the consistent behavior pattern of choosing being alone over being with someone will result in feelings of loneliness, actions without accountability, and communication that lacks transparency that comes from being known.

Our conversations get filled with pleasantries like “How’s it going” inviting left to be wanting answers as “doing well”. In these short interactions we call “Fellowship,” no personal information, no struggles, no concerns, no cries for help, no open, raw honesty, no transparency; no real fellowship has taken place. Now there are times for these pleasantries, and one could argue that the person in that interaction could still feel seen, feel a quick moment of care, or even fill their cup of social interactions for a day. But I’m not speaking to a church filled with baby Christians, struggling to understand the basics of scripture, human nature, and world system; I’m speaking to mature Christians, grounded in their faith, who are an assembled body of believers brought together under the brotherhood, bought and paid for through Christ’s blood, and that bears a bond greater than human flesh, that Identity of Christ for one purpose: to reflect God’s character to Him and in this world for God’s glory. Who understands that we cannot live this Christian life running solo with guns blazing, trying to do it all on our own, but rather we know that we need to act strategically together to address the warfare that takes place against Christ if we want to win the daily battle happening in all our lives.

So, how do we address these situations where we know we need a community who knows us and we them, while building up what bonds our community in the fellowship of Christ? We will see the biblical evidence for how we are to go about Christian (Biblical) Community and what the practical ways are to apply it to our lives and the lives of those involved in the Church. But first, if you are not sold on the fact of the human need for social interaction, we will do a little research through secular sources and biblical sources to show that across the globe humanity has recognized and proven its need for social interaction in community.

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(Preface, Secular Evidence)

The International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health published a study on the need for social interactions within humankind called “What Is Social Connection in the Context of Human Need: An Interdisciplinary Literature Review”. In this study, they researched the need for humanity to socialize with one another as compared to the health needs of water, food, and oxygen. Their findings led them to believe that mankind's need for social interaction with other human beings is equivalent to the need for food, water, and oxygen. They proved the direct influence it has on population health and mortality. This proves that mankind was not designed by God to be completely separated from other human beings. (*What Is Social Connection in the Context of Human Need: An Interdisciplinary Literature Review. Bauer KL 2025*)

In another study titled “Social Connection as a Critical Factor for Mental and Physical Health: Evidence, Trends, Challenges and Future Implications.” Their study found that social disconnection and retreating from people will cause mental and physiological health issues in the individual, which continues in unhealthy patterns of isolation. It proves that physical isolation harms physical health, while loneliness affects the individual, leading to depression and mental instability. This will not get better but will only worsen as it is left unmaintained and spirals into more and more isolation from one another. They point out that while this directly results in isolation, our modern population is experiencing increasing isolation from others due to the integration of technology and AI services. This is not the only cause of isolation from other people, but it does play a sizable role in providing excuses for isolation under the deception that social interactions are taking place. (Side note: Watching a service from the isolation of your home is better than nothing, but it does not make up for the community that is needed in attending church with your church family). This details the need for humanity's overall physical and mental health to place themselves in a community where they are not separated in isolation but connected through relationships. (*Social Connection as a Critical Factor for Mental and Physical Health: Evidence, Trends, Challenges and Future Implications. Holt-Lunstad J. 2024*)

This next article proves that the need for not living in isolation is not just a Western cultural phenomenon but extends beyond the North American borders to the rest of the world. The title of this study, “Social Networks and Cooperation in Hunter-Gatherers,” authors prove that people in all other cultures also have a need for social interactions and have set up their social constructs to keep each other depending upon each other. They found that these more primitive cultures as compared to modern societies, have social constructs that require the same special human interactions with each other in order to survive. And they would set up their social dependency upon each other in a way that brought dependency upon family and non-family social interactions in order to survive. This proved that even those systems of social networking as a society centered greatly on coming together and forming bonds that were necessary for their survival extend beyond American culture and span all humanity: the need to have community. (*Social Networks and Cooperation in Hunter-Gatherers. Apicella CL 2012*)

Lastly, as a part of this portion of the study to prove there is a physiological and mental need for social interactions with others in a community, we see that across many differing cultures they all need human interactions. This shows the need for humanity, as agreed across the board of Secular and Christian understanding, to socialize and live out their life in

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community with other human beings. There are no other substitutes for what human interactions can and will provide. As the author stated in his article “Cultural Psychology: Beyond East and West,” the need for social interactions within multiple cultures was very evident. He witnessed that the social interactions of these multiple cultures proved that they all had in common their need for one another as interdependents. (*Cultural Psychology: Beyond East and West. Shinobu Kitayama 2024*)

Now let's take a look at the social constructs we see in evidence of Jewish history and as God instructed according to the Jewish customs of biblical times.

- God's Covenant and Law:

We first see that Israel's structure was built around the old covenant of the law, established to show their need for the Savior and that they could never attain His Holiness. (Exo. 19:5,6; Lev. 19:2; Deut. 6:4-6) Their structure was placing God at the center of their organization as a theocracy where God leads as the unifying factor of keeping their society focused on their common goal, to glorify God.

- Family responsibility and order:

This family unit began once a man and woman were joined together in marriage. (Gen. 2:18, 21-24) The family was the main place where teaching and instruction on how to live the best life for the Lord took place so that the next generation would remember and follow after God. (Psalm 78:5-8) Parents were to raise their children in the obedience of the Scriptures on dealing with relationships, worshiping God, interacting with the poor, widowed, and needy, and obedience to government structures. (Deut. 6:6-7; Prov. 22:6). And children were taught that the structure of the home was to honor their parents through obedience and respect (Exo. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Prov. 1:8,9). And through this structure, everyone had stability, teaching/training was taking place, an atmosphere of biblical growth was formed, and God's legacy was carried on from generation to generation as the best way to live life. (That is, considering a perfect world as God intended it to be, we know there are many more relationship caveats and side roads into the family structure that is complicated by sin in its social construction, but for the sake of this study we are only looking into the basics by which God established it to be.) Families were often close-knit, living together and often in the same trade or line of business as well.

- Worship and Priestly duties:

A tabernacle was built as a place to worship God and a reminder for God's people that God is set apart from them as Holy, and it was an example of who they serve. God gave them specific ways they needed to worship Him and what would classify as a clean offering or an unclean. God also instructed the Levites to be the priests and take care of temple operations, allowing one priest to come into His presence once a year to show the separation God had from mankind's sins and prove their need for a mediator. (Exo. 25:8; Exo. 40:34,35; Lev. 1:5; 10:10,11; Num. 3:5-10) And they were given the task to show who God was to all other nations! (Isa. 49:6) Everyone was to worship the same way in the offerings they could bring and the commandments they could live out for the Lord in their relationships.

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- Governmental structure:

God had established the governing of the people to be through judges and elders to oversee the areas of the needs of the people. He established it to be a theocracy where everyone looked to the law of the Scriptures as the law of the land and God as their king, but they eventually turned away from that and had kings assigned to them. (Isa. 33:22; 1 Sam. 1:8) God was to be the one leading and guiding His people, for their purpose to be fulfilled in living out an example to all nations of their need for God.

- Responsibilities for each organization to society:

They were all to treat each other as equals, judging righteously and fairly. (Lev. 19:15,18) They were to assist in the provisional aspect of the poor, fatherless, and widow by leaving portions of their harvest behind for their gleaning. (Deut. 24:17-22) There was a provisional element that all was required to supply to the needy that brought them together and caused an interdependence on each other for survival.

Collectively, putting all these together, you can see the need for community where they each provide something for each other physically, mentally, and spiritually, as they are interlocked together religiously, provisionally, and structurally.

What we see in looking at the example of Israel and the Jewish construct of society as established by God is that whether you are looking into the family unit, worship, or societal interactions of support and interaction, you see that there is a need for humanity to support, nurture, teach, grow, and mature spiritually and physically in a community that builds each area of one's life. No man is an island; each person is to stand alongside another to unite for the common cause of Christ. God never established this world for humanity to live it alone in isolation but to feel the needed humility of relying on one another to become more like Christ for His glory.

So, this proves that the sociological, mental, physical, and spiritual way God created us was not to live in isolation but to live in community with each other, being known and knowing each other. We even see that the evidence is so strong that those who also believe in "survival of the fittest" and other evolutionary development stages of mankind's origin also cannot deny the beautiful united force that mankind shares in their need for one another in community, in the way God and the Holy Trinity share!

Proposed point:

Ultimately, as we are created in the image of God, we are made with the need for community in the way God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit enjoy unifying community with each other. We struggle in the communities we have built because we deal with selfish and sinful mankind, but that does not negate the necessity for the communal bond that is built in a well-balanced community centered on God's Word. We should be transparent and sharing in

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our Struggles, Concerns, Laughter, Excitement, Determination, Counsel, Purpose, Ideas, Wisdom, Being seen, Being heard, Comfort, Insight, where our community is the place where you should not feel like you left the comforts of home but instead you just joined the extension of your family that you passionately know and understand and where you are understood. This is the transparency of "intimacy - into me you see" that is lacking in the biblical community of the church and is needed in each individual life of the believers, which is YOU!

Evidence:

- Definition of Community: A community is a group of individuals linked by geographic proximity, shared interests, or a common identity who interact and support one another.
- Our common identity is the identity we share in Christ. (Look at the end of the paper for the study on Identity in Christ)

Examples of where Biblical Community can happen and how it should take place in our lives:

Biblical Community in Corporate Worship (Church meetings):

- + God has laid out in Scripture the expectations for his children to meet on a regular basis and to build their community established in the pillars of Christ as the cornerstone of its community construction. God has created mankind and knows the areas of dependence that He has created us to have: a dependence on Him and each other. No one human being was created to be a stand-alone solo cowboy, navigating the figurative deserts of the workplace, home, and inner self. That is why we have the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12, Roman 12, and Ephesians 4 to be used to build each other up in our identity in Christ and to tear down the areas where we still subscribe to the ways of the "old man".
- Through edifying each other by using their spiritual gifts...
(See 1 Cor. 12, Romans 12, and Eph. 4)
 1. Serving - A practical, Spirit-empowered drive to meet tangible needs. Those with this gift notice what others overlook and move without needing recognition.
 2. Teaching - Gifted ability to explain and apply Scripture clearly so others genuinely understand and grow. More than knowledge transfer, it produces transformation.
 3. Encouraging - Coming alongside others to strengthen, comfort, and call out what God is doing in them. This gift builds people up when they are ready to quit.
 4. Giving - Supernaturally motivated generosity, marked by cheerfulness and freedom from attachment to wealth. Often paired with the ability to generate resources.
 5. Leading - Casting vision and motivating others toward a God-given mission with diligence and clarity.

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6. Mercy - Extending compassion to the suffering with genuine warmth, not duty. This gift is drawn to the broken and marginalized.
 7. Wisdom - Supernaturally applied insight to a situation beyond natural reasoning. Knowing what God would have done in a specific moment.
 8. Knowledge - Revealed understanding of facts or truth that could not be naturally known. Not saving faith, but an extraordinary, Spirit-given confidence that God will act in a specific situation. Mountain-moving trust.
 9. Discerning of Spirits - Ability to distinguish between what is from the Holy Spirit, human spirit, or demonic influence. A protective gift for the body.
 10. Helping - Practical, Spirit-empowered support that enables others to fulfill their calling. Often unseen but essential.
 11. Administration - Gifted capacity to organize, plan, and steer the body toward its God-given mission.
 12. Evangelist - Supernaturally effective at communicating the gospel and leading others to faith.
 13. Pastor - Shepherds and protects the flock with care, nurture, and long-term commitment.
- Through Prayer...
 - + God has given us instructions on who and what to pray for and to Whom. So, when we come together as part of the worship that should be taking place together. He has also laid out in Scripture the varying types of prayers that take place when we come before God with particular requests and praises.
 1. Pray individually ("Pray without ceasing" 1 Thess. 5:17)
 2. Pray for one another ("Pray one for another..." James 5:16)
 3. Pray for all people ("Prayers...be made for all men." 1 Tim. 2:1)
 4. Pray for those who minister ("Brethren, pray for us." 1 Thess. 5:25)
 5. Gather together in prayer ("These all continued with one accord in prayer..." Acts 1:14)
 6. Pray together during trials ("Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him (Peter)." Acts 12:5)
 7. Pray for unity ("That they all may be one..." John 17:21)So we see that it is of God's design that a part of our community as the church is to fellowship in prayer. But this also means that we have to be real and honest with one another, not as a form of gossip but rather a form of being transparent for the help of the saints in lifting up our personal needs and desires before our listening Father. We then also come together in prayer, acknowledging who our Holy Father is as a form of worship together.
 - Through Singing...
 - + Singing songs together as a community is one of the ways God desires to be worshiped, and it unites us in heart, praise, and voice for His Honor and Glory. God has the beautiful melodies of heaven with Him for all eternity, and yet He instructed us to sing songs together; He desires our heartfelt praise.
 1. Singing songs that acknowledge the wonder of God.

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2. Singing songs about God's wondrous creation.
 - Psalm 95:1-6 "O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. ²Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. ³For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. ⁴In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. ⁵The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. ⁶O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker."
 - Psalm 98:1 "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."
 -
3. Singing spirit-led songs that also teach and admonish us.
 - Ephesians 5:18-20 "¹⁸And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; ¹⁹Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; ²⁰Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;"
 - Colossians 3:16 "¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
4.
 - Through Teaching/Preaching...
 1. Teaching while gathered together (Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:11-12)
 2. Preaching while gathered together. (Acts 5:42)

Biblical Community in the Workplace:

- Working together to achieve the common goal of the business.
- Struggling through the hardships of meeting the goal for the success of the business.
- Coming alongside each other to better fulfill the individual tasks that are before each person in order to better the welfare of the entire unit.
- Having fun with each other, like making inside jokes that only a person in the industry would understand.
- Exposing the strengths and weaknesses of each other in order to better the individual skills of the coworkers.
- Being an example of the Character of Christ to your coworkers and boss.

Biblical Community in the off hours:

- Grabbing a bite to eat after the work shift is through.
- Hitting the gym together.

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- Thrifting or window shopping at the mall.
- Being an example of Christ's Character to your friends.
- Grabbing a coffee while doing a Bible study.
- Counseling a friend over a phone call.

Biblical Community in the Home:

- Uplifting each other no matter how much the nerves are in hyperdrive.
- Shooting it straight with those you know more personally than others would.
- Being honest with each other and informing each other about how the relationships that are created need to get better or how they are doing well.
- Acknowledging the faults you have fallen into and purposing to mend the relationships where they have been broken.
- Being an example as to how Christ would deal with and interact with His own family.
- Dealing with conflict resolution, whether being dealt with or brushed off to the side.
- Ignoring problems or dealing with them directly.

Reasons/Excuses why people avoid community;

- It is not my personality.
- I have "social anxiety".
- I'm just shy.
- I never know what to talk about.
- I'm scared I will embarrass myself.
- I'm just a hermit.
- I prefer animals.
- People don't understand me.
- I have been hurt by people.
- I have church hurt.
- I'm scared to share my personal life with another person.
- I'm worried I will be seen as weird or different if people knew what I'm struggling with.
- I'm afraid of disappointing someone.
- They are just my family; I hardly tolerate them, let alone let them into my life.
- Being vulnerable with my children or wife will just make me look weak; then I will lose the respect I need as their leader, as a husband and father.
- I am here to maintain the sanity of the home, not share with them my struggles as their mother.
- I am too tired after working a long week.
- I come to "church" to fill a role or duty, not to get to know people.

Personalized takeaways:

- How does this change the way I view my community?
 - + Am I purposing to serve or be served:
 - + _____

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- What should change in my interactions with my community?
 - + How often am in community:
+ _____
 - + How do I treat those in my community:
+ _____
- How should I change my community?
 - + Who should or should not be a part of the community I connect with:
+ _____
- What is my purpose in being in the community?
 - + What role am I serving in my community:
+ _____
- Why do I (personally) need community?
 - + What am I expecting to receive from my community:
+ _____
- What is the purpose of Church Fellowship (Community), and do I fulfill that purpose by the way I interact with the body of Christ?
 - + _____

Conclusion:

After looking into the need for mankind to have social interaction by way of community, seeing it is not only a desire of some but a need for all, analyzing what bonds us together as fellow believers in the identity of Christ, and discovering the ways that each of us can interact in our community of believers...how will we change? We are all called to use our spiritual gifts and to learn of each other. Go out of your way to invest in your brother or sister in Christ; ask more than "how are you doing" and leave it at that. Discover each other as those a part of your community at home, church, and work. Wherever a believer breathes is the existence of another to join him or her in community.

- **Add-on** "Save a life, give a hug"! The Hug Rule Per-Day: 4 for survival, 8 for maintenance and stability, and 12 for growth.

Individual Study.

Identity in Christ that we share in common with believers:

This is the universal connection that leads the largest group of people together across the most multicultural community in the world: The identity we share in Christ.

From the beginning of time, people have been questioning the reason for their existence. Although the first man and woman were given explicit direction from the Creator on what their purpose was, we quickly lost sight of that purpose. God created mankind as an instrument of worship, to bring Him glory by bringing attention to His awesome wonder. Mankind was never intended to serve self or even build themselves the life that would be desired by “The American Dream” or “climbing the corporate ladder”.... Instead, they were given the responsibility to have a relationship with God and learn how He desires to be worshipped and the testimony we are to carry to the world of His character, attributes, and abilities. We have built a life that distracts us with things that bring pleasure and find our purpose in what we can make for ourselves. We need to return our focus to what God has created us to do: worship him. And in order to do this, we need to know who we are as mankind. Who we are is the identifier for how we are to live out a life that reflects the true identity we bear.

- Theory one: Mankind is created through evolution and does not have a purpose. They were created by accident, evolved from nothing, and have no purpose but to survive.
- Result of theory: Mankind turns to self-pleasure as the most gratifying purpose that creates the greatest life for themselves in order to stand above their other primates. The strongest will fight for themselves and do anything to build up their own kingdom. With no hope for the future after this world.

- Theory two: Mankind was created by God and was formed in His likeness and image. They were created with the purpose to glorify God by a life of service and enjoy the life that God has gifted them, all while looking forward to a better life afterward, with hope for the future after this world.
- Result of theory: Mankind lives with a purpose of glorifying God through serving Him and enjoying his creations. Serving Him by serving others and putting Christ first in all things, loving Him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. They serve others as equal creatures of His image and sacrifice for others in love, the way Christ loved all the world by sacrificing His life for their salvation. They look forward to an eternity of fellowship and pleasure through glorifying God in perfected bodies for all eternity.

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Defining the terms:

- I. Mankind: human beings considered collectively; the total, uniform human race.
- II. Sin: those things that contrast God's character; actions that miss the mark of perfection as seen in God's holiness.
- III. Sin-nature: the sin-bent tendency in human nature to act on those things that contradict God and His desires.
- IV. Righteous/ness: used of him whose way of thinking, feeling, motivations, and actions are wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no rectification/punishment in the heart or life.
- V. Identity: the fact of being who or what the person or thing is.

Origin of mankind:

God created mankind in His image, Genesis 1:27 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Genesis 5:1,2 "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him." "Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created."

God made a being in His image, which reflects several aspects that are separated from the rest of creation but are similar to God.

- Conscience:
 - A moral scale of right and wrong with the ability to make a choice based on that moral understanding. (Verse: Romans 2:15,16; 1 Tim. 1:5; Matt. 4:1-10)
- Pride:
 - The ability to take appreciation in one's completed work. (Verse: Gen. 1:31)
- Creativity:
 - The ability to construct something from nothing and the ability to imagine something that is not already existing. (Verse: Gen. 1; Col. 1:16,17; Gen. 11:2-4)
- Given a soul:
 - Breathed the breath of life (soul) into mankind (verse: Gen. 2:7)
- Communication:
 - The ability to have relationships and interact with other human beings and God (in the spiritual realm) beyond the basic instincts of animal communication. (verse: Gen. 2:16-18; 3:8-19; Eph. 4:29; Gen. 11:1) Also, to reflect Christ in relationship with the church, as husband and wife should reflect. (Eph. 5:22-33)
- Aware of their third person:
 - Mankind has a unique ability to step back and see himself as for who he is in body and spirit as similar to God. (Verse: John 17:1-7; Exodus 4:10; 3:14; Psalm 63)
- Righteous:

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- Mankind was made to be pure as God is pure. And mankind originally was completely pure. (Gen. 1:31)
- Love:
 - Mankind was made in the identity of a sacrificial servant, the truest form of love. (Phil. 2:6-9; John 15:3; 1 Cor. 13:4-8)

Just as these are the likeness and image mankind was made to be, they are to live out these attributes in the purity by which they were established. God's intentions for mankind were to form a servant that would serve Him and enjoy Him forever, and He gave them everything they needed to accomplish it. (Phil. 2:1-8; Ecc. 12:13).

It is not until the sinfulness of man and the corruption it brought into the being of man that we see the attributes of mankind altered into a twisted/perverted nature.