

MIGHTY OAK MINISTRIES



They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. (Isaiah 61:3)

Pat J. Sikora

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Three Reasons You Need Community

Everyone needs community. Everyone needs to be connected. There are over 100 references in the New Testament referring to our need for *one another*. People simply will not—cannot—grow outside of community. So are you in community? And are you creating community for those within your sphere of influence?

“Community is what you were created for. It is God’s desire for your life. It is the one indispensable condition for human flourishing.”

John Ortberg,
*Everybody’s Normal
Till You Get to Know
Them*

Community is, most simply, a place to belong.

God created us to live in community, to belong. Since the creation, mankind has learned that people thrive in healthy communities and languish alone. The family, the church, the

town, the club, even Starbucks®—all of these serve the purpose of community.

So what do we know about community that you can use?

1. Community helps to shape the individual into that which is valued in the society, whether that society is the family, the church, the town, or the
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Why Didn't You Warn Me? How to Deal With Challenging Group Members

Releasing April 2nd!

On April 2, Standard Publishing will begin shipping my new book, *Why Didn't You Warn Me? How to Deal with Challenging Group Members* to bookstores.

If you want to be among the first to receive your copy—and save a little in the process—you can pre-order online at [Mighty Oak Ministries](http://MightyOakMinistries.com). The book, which retails for \$7.99, will sell for \$6.99 **until March 31**. You can also save on the other three books in the series.



Community *(from page 1)*

nation. Beyond the basic economic and structural aspects of community, there is a deeper purpose for people to interact with one another. In community, our strengths and weaknesses are reflected in the eyes of others and as a result, healthy people change and become better. When community works well, these changes are influenced primarily by love and mutual respect. But when community breaks down, changes are more influenced by coercion and law.

In the industrialized world, we've lost the natural groupings of family, kinship groups, and villages, so we need to work at deliberately re-creating a community in which to be known, loved, and supported. S.D. Gaede in *Belonging: Our Need for Community in Church and Family* says that today, "Relationships...are consciously chosen and cultivated, or else they do not exist."

Are you consciously cultivating community?

2. In community, we have a place to grow, to mature, and to heal.

In the best of societies, the family, church, and government work together to esteem people and fulfill these functions. In the worst of societies, these same structures demean people and cause great harm. We see this today where a combination of abuse, neglect, and shifting social values have resulted in many who are wounded beyond measure and can barely function in the community. Increasingly, people no longer know how to conduct themselves in a group, whether that group is a family, a classroom, a church, or a town. Our churches and ministries reap the fruit of this deterioration.

"People need to know who they are. They also need to be reminded who they are, frequently, by those who know them and really love them. And they need repair, so that they can live from the hearts Jesus gave them. That is what it takes to achieve wholeness in a fractured world. It takes belonging to a community."

James Friesen, James Wilder, et al
*Living From the Heart
Jesus Gave You:
The Essentials of Christian Living*

Are you consciously cultivating community?

3. The good news is that God is bringing wounded people into the church for the purpose of healing. Yes, He's doing it on purpose! He's calling the church to form loving communities in which these people can heal. How does this happen?

Wounded people begin to heal as they are known, accepted, and loved. One church calls this "relational deliverance"—healing through relationships. That won't happen much on the average Sunday morning where most communication is one-way

and where it's easy to get lost in the crowd. Rather, it will happen in small groups, in social settings, in places where more mature people embrace the less mature and encourage them to grow. I've seen this happen repeatedly through the ministry of the church and small groups.

Are you consciously cultivating community?

For ongoing ideas and discussion on cultivating community, even among the challenging, be sure to visit the *Why Didn't You Warn Me?* blog at

<http://whydidntyouwarnme.com/blog/>

Excerpted from *Why Didn't You Warn Me? How to Deal With Challenging People*, by Pat J. Sikora, Standard Publishing 2007

If you didn't get the FREE PDF download "Making Time for Prayer" when you signed up for the newsletter, you can get it [here](#).



**Visit Our
NEW
Website!**

To celebrate and support *Why Didn't You Warn Me?* we've started a new [website](#) and [blog](#). Stop by and say hi.

We want to use the blog to extend the ministry of the book, to answer your questions, and to engage in conversation with you. So please visit us, book-

mark the new site, and tell others who are involved in any form of leadership.

If you have a blog or other venue where you can help spread the word about the book, we'd appreciate it.

Exciting Ministry at BASS



We had the opportunity to minister to several hundred people in six workshops at the BASS Church Workers Convention in Castro Valley March 1-3.

Pat taught three workshops in the counseling track on Friday and three in the small groups track on Saturday. All of my workshops were full, some to overflowing. It was a delight to

minister to so many pastors and lay people who are so committed to serving and equipping others.

BASS is one of the largest church worker conventions in the nation with an attendance of over 3,000. It reflects the delightful diversity of the Body of Christ, not only in ethnic groups, but also in denominations, types of ministry, and age of participants.

We were encouraged by general session speakers John Townsend, Paul Sheppard, and Francis Chan. Don Moen led worship, supported by the multi-church BASS Praise Team led by Kathy Anthony. What a wonderful time of cross-pollination, encouragement, and stimulation.

Congratulations to *Rovellyn Linn*, *Soon Chung*, and *Jennifer Rodrigues*, who each won a complete set of the four-book Small Group HELP!

Guides, complements of Standard Publishing.

Ministry to Writers

We've had two opportunities to minister to writers this year. In January, Pat and Bob taught a two-day *Building Blocks of Editing* class to high school and middle school students at Fremont Christian School. This was a well-received class for students who had been recommended by their teachers.

In February, Pat taught three workshops at the Redwood Christian Writers Seminar in Castro Valley. This annual event headed up by Jon Drury is a highlight of our year.

Pat J. Sikora has been encouraging Christians for over 30 years. Her most recent book, *Why Didn't You Warn Me? How to Deal With Challenging Group Members*, gives small group leaders strategies for effectively serving the most challenging people in their groups. She ministers through Mighty Oak Ministries at www.mightyoakministries.com and *Why Didn't You Warn Me* at www.whydidntyouwarnme.com.

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