

COMMUNITY AND BELONGING

"God Sets the Lonely in Families"

Key Passages

Psalm 68:6 — "God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land."

Psalm 133:1 — "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"

Study Focus

Sarah used to have what she called her "people." But somewhere in the years since her son's diagnosis, they had drifted. Not dramatically—no one had said anything cruel. But invitations had stopped coming when she canceled one too many times. Conversations had gotten awkward when she couldn't just talk about normal things. Now, sitting in a waiting room while her son was in therapy, she scrolled through her phone and realized she didn't have anyone she could honestly call.

Isolation is one of the most common and most underaddressed experiences of special needs families. It happens in layers: the social exhaustion that makes evenings out feel impossible; the inability to get babysitters; the slow erosion of peer friendships as shared life experiences diverge; and the grief of feeling like you need a translator just to explain your daily reality to people who care about you.

Psalm 68:6 contains a striking claim: God is the one who "sets the lonely in families." The Hebrew word for lonely describes someone who is isolated, cut off, alone in a way that is painful. The promise is not that loneliness will never come, but that God is actively working against it—placing isolated people in communities of belonging. This is not passive. It implies intention, movement, arrangement.

For special needs families, finding community often requires more intentionality than it did before. Groups of people who truly understand—who don't require explanation, who have walked similar roads, who can laugh and cry at the same moments—don't fall into your lap easily. But Psalm 133 suggests they are worth pursuing fiercely. This is not a luxury. It is part of how God designed us to survive.

Discussion Qs

Couples

1. How has your social world changed since becoming a special needs family—what have you lost, and what, if anything, have you found?
2. Who are the people in your life who truly understand your family's experience without needing extensive explanation?
3. How do you make time and space for community when the demands of caregiving leave little margin?
4. What barriers make it hardest to connect with other people—and which of those could you address together?
5. What would it look like to build or deepen one meaningful friendship as a couple this year?

Dads

1. When did you last feel genuinely understood and supported by another man who knew the specific weight you carry?
2. How does isolation affect you emotionally, and what do you do when it gets heavy?
3. What barriers keep you from seeking out or building meaningful friendships as a special needs dad?
4. What would a community that truly supported you look like—and does anything like that currently exist in your life?
5. What is one step you could take toward deeper connection with another person this month?

Moms

1. How has your circle of friendship changed over the years, and how do you feel about where it stands now?
2. What makes it hardest to maintain close friendships when life is this demanding and complicated?
3. When you imagine a community that truly "gets it," what does that look like—and where might it already be beginning to form?
4. How do you balance the vulnerability required for real community with the self-protection that chronic stress creates?
5. What is one relationship you want to invest in more deeply this year, and what would that investment look like?

Application: Identify one person who has been a source of true understanding and support. Reach out to them this week and tell them what their presence has meant to you.