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**Annie:**    Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today on a Friday. We love a Friday bonus episode, especially a short and sweet one that gets right to the point.

Today on the show I wanted to share with you a special Build Your Board series conversation with my friends Micah and Shireen Eldridge. You heard the elder just yesterday on That Sounds Fun, as we talked all about who is praying for you. And you guys, if you haven't listened, you're definitely going to want to go back and hear that conversation.

Micah and Shireen are both pastors on staff at Lifegate Church in Omaha, Nebraska, and they are these really trusted, faithful friends of mine that are so wise. They pastor a lot of people in their community. So as we are thinking about finding the voices you need to live the life that you want, what if the voice you need is a pastor?

Micah and Shireen are just so helpful as we dive into the questions: what role does our pastor serve on our board and what do we do if we want our pastor on our board? And what do we do if they can't do it?

So here is my Build Your Board bonus conversation with my friends Shireen and Micah.

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**Annie:**    Shireen and Micah Eldridge, thank you for being with us for a little bonus content here.

**Micah:**    Very grateful.

**Annie:**    Very grateful. If people have not heard your prayer team episode, I think they should go back and listen to that. That was so helpful. Oh, my gosh, it was so helpful. But Micah, as a lead pastor at a large church, one of the pieces of feedback we're getting with this Build Your Board series is "I want my pastor on my board. I want to meet with my pastor. He and she are teaching me from the stage. I want them to be on my board." Is that possible?

**Micah:**    Great question. I think it depends on the type of church that you attend and the way that your pastor functions within the body. But I think the more important question is, Do I have a pastoral voice in my life?

**Annie:** Wow.

**Micah:** I think a lot of times we can focus on that job title and say, "You're supposed to be this for me," which I'm confident that every pastor out there wishes they could be with his community of people as possible. But not only does time not allow, but I actually think it really kind of hinders the way the body can function when we're learning how to lean on one another, we're learning how to gain counsel from one another and insight from one another.

So I think having a pastoral voice in your life, who you feel like you can kind of put yourself under their leadership, put yourself under their wisdom, put yourself under their voice in a way, I think as long as you've got that, hopefully, you've got that spot filled.

**Annie:** Someone who discipled you. Someone who discipled you can be that pastoring voice where a pastor who has more than, I don't know, 100 people in his church probably isn't able to meet with everyone. More than 20 people in his church, you probably can't be with everybody.

**Shireen:** Probably.

**Micah:** Honestly. So I think that's the key. And that's the beauty of having groups in churches. It's the beauty of having organic relationships. No matter how big your church is, work to engage the people that are sitting around you or get involved to be a part of what's happening. And I believe that pastoral voice, that discipler will come to the surface. That's really what you need is that more than anything.

**Shireen:** I do think you can expect to at least have a conversation, right? Like, I should be able to go sit down and maybe seek counsel on something very specific, maybe a one-time meeting, here and there. I know Micah does that often. But having them as maybe a consistent person on your board or in your life in that intimate way maybe is not as realistic.

**Micah:** What I'll often do is say, I'm open to meeting with pretty much anybody wants. What I can't do is the weekly meetings with everybody, obviously. So if someone's willing to wait a little while and we can have a meeting, what will often happen is I can build that relationship with them, and then help them connect with someone who can be a more consistent personal voice in their life. And I think that helps.

**Annie:** Shireen, as you're pastoring a lot of women at your church, you're in charge of the women's ministry at your church. There have to be so many women who want to meet with you.

**Shireen:** Yeah.

**Annie:** And that's the nature of the thing, right? The one they see on the stage, the one who has a face on the website, the one who is called the women's pastor is the one they are going to go to. So talk to the other women leading around you or around the women's pastors about their role between the leader, the women's ministry leader, the women's pastor, and the people attending.

**Shireen:** Absolutely. You know, because we are multicampus, I do have that. I have women's leaders, volunteer leaders at all the other campuses and they also could be up on the stage preaching and teaching. They care for their women very well.

And when we meet together, I always tell them, "You are pastoring these women as well. You are a shepherd in God's house." I give them as many opportunities as I can for the women in their lives to see them as their leader as well. So I would tell them, like, you can do the same things.

I mean, as long as you can love people, and ask them good questions, and be in their life, that's really what pastoring is. They want wisdom. They want someone who listens. They want to feel known and loved. We all hopefully can do that if we're following Jesus.

So I always remind them, You can do that. You don't have to have the Bible all the way known and understood. I mean, I don't even. You know, that's not what people are needing when they're coming to you as a pastor. They want love and care and to be known and heard.

**Annie:** Micah, talk to the pastors for just a minute as we wrap up of like, how do you say no? And to our friends listening to we're gonna get nos from their pastors, what do we do?

**Micah:** Well, I'm getting a lot of practice in this right now. I'm new to the lead pastor thing. I've been here for 15 years, I just became the lead pastor three months ago. There's something about even just stepping into that role. It's like the faucet turned on, the email started pouring in, even though I've been here.

**Annie:** Right. Right. I take the approach that in most cases I'll try to meet with you once, as I mentioned before. So it's a "hey, if you're willing to wait a little while, we can do a coffee or lunch at some point."

But then once the ask is, "Can it be consistent?" or if it's something that I actually don't think I can help them with, the way to say no, I think, because these are real

needs and there's a genuine desire here for help, for feedback, for counsel, for prayer, is to connect them to the right person.

So what might be a no for me is a yes for somebody else. So I spent a lot of time, "You know what? You should actually meet with this person." And that's not to just like push somebody off. It's genuinely like they're going to help you more than I will.

**Shireen:** They can care for you better because they have more space?.

**Micah:** And whether it's their more expertise in this area or whether it's they have more availability to meet with you consistently. So a lot of times for me there hopefully is an initial yes if possible. If not, it is then a "not me, but them" and I should move over to somebody else.

**Shireen:** And it elevates other people on your staff and team to really step in and lead and use their-

**Micah:** For volunteer.

**Shireen:** Yeah. ...and use their giftings. That way it's not always just one person.

**Micah:** And I would say to the pastors out there who feel... because I feel it at times is the guilt of I can't personally pastor every person in my fellowship-

**Shireen:** I feel that.

**Annie:** Do you feel that too, Shireen?

**Shireen:** Oh yeah.

**Micah:** I think it's the question that you have to remind yourself consistently and your connection with Jesus, what can only I do? What am I really called to do? What role do I serve in the life of these people? I'm asking that question all the time. And having to bring myself back to that place: This is what I'm called to do. Any other expectations I feel outside of that are usually either placed upon me by other people or by myself.

It was very clear Jesus knew what He was called to do. I think that was John too. Jesus knew what He was called to do. And we have to continue to anchor ourselves in that.

**Shireen:** I also think for people, if they're asking and they get a no, I think you have a little bit of grace and understanding of what this person's life, what the pastoral life looks like. And there are probably other people on, you know, especially if you're at a bigger church, on staff that you can reach out to.

And maybe it's just a no for now in this season because the pastor has a lot going on. But to know that there are always, at least from what I know, many church staff, there are so many other great people who have a lot of the same giftings and wisdom, and who can lead pastor give you wisdom, counsel you in the same way.

**Annie:** And everybody who's gifted on stage is not gifted across a coffee table.

**Micah:** True.

**Annie:** So you also may have an expectation that you're gonna get a sermon at a coffee with a pastor and that's not their gifting.

**Shireen:** Very, very true.

**Micah:** I think for a lot of pastors who if you're preaching regularly, you are that one on stage, make this clear to the congregation. Set that expectation.

**Annie:** That's good, Micah.

**Micah:** And not so much like, "Hey, I can't be your friend so be okay with that." That usually doesn't go over real well." But more the "we have an amazing church with an amazing rich fellowship where there's so many resources." Elevate people on your team. Talk about how great they are. Talk about this volunteer. Just continue to bring attention to people outside of yourself so that their focus, the ones who are listening isn't always on you but it's on the breath of all these other resources we have in this church and how they can access them.

**Annie:** That's great. I mean, Lifegate socials, you can see that. You can see that you have set up a lot of leaders as leaders you can go to. Pastor Kevin does this so good at Cross Point. He's not on the podcast. He doesn't teach at college ministry. He's not in children's church. He does what he is called to do, and he elevates everyone else to go, Now you go run what you're called to do.

And then we kind of know, Hey, if you're a college student, you're going to Lad Morgan. And even Lad has set up his small group leaders. So it's not always Lad for every call. I mean, that's two churches you can watch that are doing this in a respectable way. So well done, y'all.

**Annie:** Thank you.

**Micah:** Yes.

**Annie:** That's awesome. That's really helpful. That's really helpful. So thanks for doing this.

**Shireen:** Yeah.

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**Outro:** Okay, y'all, that was so helpful. I'm so thankful for Micah and Shireen speaking into that. We've had many of y'all give us feedback about wondering and thinking about a pastor on your board. So I'm so thankful for how they helped us with that conversation.

Go follow them on social media. They are linked in the show notes. Thank them for being on the show. And if you haven't listened to the Build Your Board episode "Who is praying for you?" go back and listen.

For a full list of all the additional resources for our Build Your Board series, go to [Anniefdowns.com/buildyourboard](http://Anniefdowns.com/buildyourboard). You can also get the guidebook there. It isn't too late. Jump in and get it, especially before our next week starts. You can take notes there, work through the questions.

If you need anything else for me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, New York City, or follow along on the That Sounds Fun Instagram @thatsoundsfunpodcast.

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I'll do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is getting lunch from a new restaurant that I have not tried yet. So that is my plan today is to try somewhere I have not tried in my neighborhood, which is pretty easy because I've eaten two places.

Y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back here on Monday as we continue our Build Your Board series with an entire week of shows. We're bringing a 30-ish minute show every day next week, featuring a different coach who might be the next person you need in your life.

And we're kicking things off on Monday, talking business coaching with my business partner and manager Kelli Haywood and our friend and business coach Chris Weinberg. We'll see y'all Monday.