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Annie: Hey 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. Listen, you know I love a week where we get to do bonus shows like we did yesterday. And guess what? Friday too. Listen, it's a week. It's a week.

Today we continue our special series called Build Your Board. It's a That Sounds Fun podcast series in which we want to help you find the voices you need to live the life that you want. If you haven't gotten your guidebook for this series, or if you want to see more resources, go to anniefdowns.com/buildyourboard. That's where you can download your copy and see a lot of links of what we have been building and thinking about this month.

Before we dive into today's conversation, let me tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Athletic Greens](#). Listen if you're looking for a simpler way to incorporate all the nutrients you need into your day without taking a bunch of different supplements, give AG1 by Athletic Greens a try.

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Intro: Today on the show, we are continuing our Build Your Board series with my friends and two of my favorite pastors, Micah and Shireen Eldridge. The Eldridges have

been doing ministry together their whole 20 years of marriage. I was in their wedding, trust me. It's been 20 years.

They are both pastors on staff at Lifegate Church in Omaha, Nebraska. I will be there in the spring at their women's conference. And they are trusted, faithful friends of mine that I know are praying on my behalf. They are part of my prayer team.

And as we talk about who might be missing on your board, it may be a person or people who you know are consistently praying for you or that you want to be consistently praying for you and want to know when there's something going on in your life that they can be praying about. We're going to talk today about what that looks like and why it all matters.

If you're following along in your Build Your Board guidebook, you're gonna be taking notes for this one on page 10. And this is a note-taking episode. There are a lot of notes to take.

So here's my Build Your Board conversation with my friends Shireen and Micah Eldridge.

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Annie: Shireen and Micah, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Micah: Great to be here.

Shireen: Yes.

Micah: We are so excited.

Annie: Shireen, people know you already online via me to some degree because y'all are a family who has chosen to observe Sabbath, even though you have little... you have bigger kids now, but from their whole time of having kids, Sabbath has been a rhythm for you.

Shireen: Yeah, it has.

Micah: Yeah, it's been a growing rhythm. We don't do it perfectly but we shoot for it regularly.

Annie: Like weekly? Micah are y'all really trying for weekly?

Micah: I mean, that's the goal.

Shireen: We say we do it and then it just looks different. In different seasons it looks different based on what our kids are doing or what church life looks like, if we have an event, things like that. But we try to say we Sabbath for the most part weekly.

Micah: Yeah.

Annie: Will y'all kind of tell where you are, what you do, kind of why are you the people on the prayer team episode?

Micah: Yes.

Annie: Because I was a bridesmaid in your wedding. Is that why? Yes.

Micah: Yes.

Shireen: Because we're friends.

Annie: That's right.

Micah: I am a lead pastor brand new as of March of this year at Lifegate Church here in Omaha, Nebraska. And one of the things... And Shireen works on staff as well. Pastor of-

Shireen: Our discipleship groups, women's, lot of things like that.

Micah: Dream come true that we get to do this together. When I first came on staff here 15 years ago to be the college pastor, one of the first things the lead pastor at the time, was named Les Beauchamp, one of the things that he encouraged us to do is to build a prayer team.

Thankfully, this church has a long history of prayer. We really do believe in the significance of it. Always have. It just was kind of one of the almost like requirements if you're going to be a part of our staff.

Annie: Really?

Micah: Yeah. I mean, it wasn't like if you don't get one, you're gonna be fired. But it was a strong, like, we really do believe that the fruitfulness of your ministry and the health of your family will be in large part influenced by those who are praying for you. And so you need to build a team.

Annie: One of the reasons I wanted y'all to do this is that you have taught me how to do this, and how much it is absolutely... I mean, I've had a prayer team for a year, less than a year since the beginning of this year, and it has shifted things significantly. Is that true for y'all? I guess for 15 years... have you had the same people praying for you for 15 years?

Micah: Okay, it's been quite the journey.

Shireen: This a whole thing. I would say we even... I mean, it was so new to us coming on staff here. Obviously, I mean, you know we have a history of we believe in prayer. That is who we are at our core. I mean, we went to same campus ministry. So you know, it was infused into who we are from day one.

So we knew the importance of prayer and why we needed to do it, why we want people to pray for us. But I think the journey to the vulnerability of letting people in in that way to pray for you is... that was a whole thing for us. I was not as ready to be that vulnerable as probably even he was.

Micah: When this was like this is a new community for us 15 years ago, coming from Georgia, really brand... like we knew nobody other than a handful of the pastors. But as far as the congregation, we didn't know anybody. So trying to invite people into a relatively trusted, very trusted, but relatively voice in your life, it took us a while to feel comfortable with that. It took us a while to find the right people. We've had different versions of prayer teams and different ministries that we've been doing.

Annie: I thought it was really interesting. In our episode that people heard a couple of days ago about counseling. The counselor and I talked about how does a pastor find a counselor.

Shireen: Oh, yeah. Oh, Oh, that's a thing.

Micah: Yes.

Shireen: We both have counselors.

Micah: I have, yes. I found a great one. He's amazing. But it's hard.

Annie: But it's hard, right? I mean, it's hard to be that vulnerable as the leader of the flock.

Micah: It is.

Shireen: Yeah, it is.

Micah: It really is. As far as the counselor goes, we've been in this three-year leadership transition. And I knew, as I was preparing to step into the lead pastor role, I've got to have a counselor. So a couple years ago, I found somebody who was great for that. And it was a similar process with a prayer team.

The difference is we both have to feel good about the people. And not just me or not just Shireen. So there's a lot of conversation about, what do you think about this person? Being a pastor, depending on the culture that you're in, sometimes people want to be a part of that team. But you know, none of us have perfect motives in anything we're doing certainly.

Sometimes it's the person who just wants to get a little inside scoop, wants to know a little bit more. They're genuine and sincere. But you have to be careful about kind of where the heart is, and how the connection, what the chemistry will be like.

Annie: Shireen, will you talk a little bit about how having people pray or just prayer, in general, has mattered to y'all especially recently? I mean, if you'll just tell the story, however, y'all want to tell it. I don't know how y'all are telling the story yet. But however you want to tell, will you tell it?

Shireen: It feels like it's different every time. I always say, first for both of us, it's been a journey in how we both are vulnerable with different people in different seasons, right? And prayer is actually very vulnerable. Like you're asking someone... you're inviting them into a very intimate place in your life and to commune with God, which is a very intimate relationship as well.

For me, I just know the value of it. So I've always been a little more hesitant with that. I think for me it goes all the way back to... I don't know if you remember, but when Micah and I first got married, I was having terrible headaches right after I came from Africa. I was miserable.

Annie: It was when we lived in the same neighborhood.

Shireen: Yes. I barely told anybody about it. And he finally kept saying, "We've got to tell..." At that point, we were on staff at Wesley. "We've got to tell our intern staff. They need to pray for you." And I was reluctant to let people pray. I didn't want to let them in.

Then we finally told the team. And I remember everyone surrounding us and we both just broke and wept, and God healed me from that point forward.

And for me, that was a turning point of remembering, Wait, some things God wants to do in a community of prayer, not just me and God. So I have to keep going back to that. It's like God reminding me, Nope, Shireen, you need people in your life that you're going to share things with who are going to be faithful to pray for you, who love you. And they will hold it just as precious as you do and they will take it to God in the same way.

That really is what helped me get to a good place with building a prayer team. He was there before I was. And even finding people, he was like, "Yeah, let's ask this person and this person."

Micah: I trust everybody.

Shireen: And I was not there. So we've had to had a lot of conversations. We had one prayer team for a season that we loved. We did ministry with them here. They weren't on staff. They were some of our leaders. We had great relationship with them and connection with them.

I remember even calling them up, we were going through a season here at the church, where we were looking for... Micah was going to be the next pastor, potentially, at one of our campuses, and we were trying to buy a campus. No one knew any of this. And so who do you share these things with?

And I finally was like, "I'm going to tell our prayer team." We need other people praying for us, because we have no one else we can share this with. And they partnered with us. They held it confidential, but they carried it for the Lord in the same way that we felt it was precious to carry. But then, most recently... I don't know if you want tell the story-

Micah: Yeah. Back in July, I had a stroke. This was a really scary moment in our lives. Obviously, Shireen was amazing through this whole thing. I woke up one morning and my left hand was not working very well. Throughout my whole life, I've had all kinds of injuries. I've downplayed whatever I'm feeling. It's like, "It's temporary, whatever." So I thought-

Shireen: You would have gone to work that day. He was gonna go to work.

Micah: Yeah. So I thought I'd slept on it funny. You know how your hand fold-

Annie: I would think the same. Yeah.

Micah: So I just got up and took a shower. And as I'm putting-

Annie: Did you lift your arm at all?

Micah: I could lift my arm, but my left hand was just floppy. So I was gonna go to work.

Annie: Micah, you just were gonna go to work, dude?

Micah: I was trying to just get ready. As I was trying to do my hair and stuff, it was just my hand was flopping. I was like, "Okay, this is not coming back to life. I kept trying to do this, trying to get it to come back to life. So got fully dressed and then... Shireen was still sleeping. I was gonna go to work early that day. And I said, "Hey, by the way, my left hand is feeling really funny right now, but I think it's going to be okay." And when I said that, I started slurring. Her eyes got huge and said, "That's a big deal." Jumped out of bed-

Shireen: I asked, "Did you have any other symptoms," and then he kept talking more, and I can tell. I was like, "This isn't right. This isn't good." And I hopped right out of bed, and I started moving. I'm like, "We're going to the hospital."

Annie: Did you wake up the kids? Y'all have four kids. Did you wake them up?

Shireen: No, it was too early. It was summer so they could sleep in. We went straight to the hospital. On the way he's voice texting our prayer team first.

Micah: I couldn't type.

Shireen: He couldn't type. But he's voice texting them. I mean, I'm in hysterics, but I'm not like... I just knew I need to get to the hospital. I need to go to the hospital. And it was, I would say, for sure, the scariest moment.

Micah: Terrible.

Shireen: The scariest moment of our lives for me so far. We've lived in other countries, have done other things but that was for sure the scariest moment.

Annie: Let me ask you a question. Before they even started praying, why was it relieving for you to reach out to them? Or was it? Was it relieving? Did it feel different once you told them?

Micah: I mean, we just knew like, I mean, if we're going to make it through whatever is happening. I think you know, my tendency to downplay everything shifted really quickly as I stopped slurring. And then it became panic mode. But the way that I handle panic is I just get really quiet and I just sat there. I didn't want to do anything. I didn't want to put any strain on my body, but internally-

Shireen: Very different from my panic.

Micah: She was all over the place.

Shireen: I'm hysteric.

Micah: I was just deeply calm, at least on the outside, but on the inside major panic. And we just knew we've got to know that people are praying for us. I mean, we're just so convinced that prayer shifts things, prayer matters.

Shireen: We've seen God do it before through people praying.

Micah: It doesn't just make us feel good because we... there's something about it. One of the things we told our church afterwards because so many people prayed for us through this whole process was I'm so thankful that we don't know what would have happened had we not prayed.

Annie: Wow

Micah: We all have skeptics in our life who were like, eh, just you know, we got lucky. It worked out. Good thing, you know, the clot went where it did and not somewhere else. But we'll never know what the alternative was had we not prayed. I want to live life that way. I want to live life in such a way that so much of what we do is so covered in prayer that I'll never know what would have happened had we not.

Shireen: I don't want to know what would have happened.

Micah: So we just knew in that moment. And we have people on our team who are just... this is the thing about a prayer team. It doesn't matter if you're a pastor, a person who's not in... Just for the general public, everybody, find people in your life who are given to prayer. Just given to pray.

We all have people who love us, hopefully. We got people who care about what's going on. You might have people who will bring you a meal when you're sick. But we have identified some people who we put a ton of trust in and they're just given in prayer.

Shireen: Yeah, they just pray.

Micah: It's just what they do.

Shireen: A lot of them already were praying for us. They have told us that. And so we're like, why not invite you in. We knew that is who we needed to reach out. They were I think the first people we texted. Then we started texting people to take care of our kids and let certain people know. Because we knew they would pray. We knew they would pray immediately, no matter what. So I believe that that shifted things.

I drove us to the hospital in less than five minutes. It's very close. I dunno how I didn't make a wrong turn. I didn't get us in a wreck. The fact that we even made it there, I'm like, they prayed. I made it. I didn't take a wrong turn. We got right in. Like, there are just so many elements when we look back now that I'm like, I'm convinced that this is because we had people immediately pounding the door of heaven for us.

Micah: Turns out after... just the short version of once we got there. By the time they realized what was going on, by the time that I had had a stroke and that I might still be having a stroke, they didn't know, you know, they rush you into a CT scan, those types of things, the clot had dissolved on its own.

Annie: I mean, on its own.

Shireen: Right?

Annie: Right.

Micah: Exactly.

Annie: All right, Lord, We see You.

Micah: The fact that it was a small stroke and a durable part of my brain, so my brain was able to kind of absorb what happened. I mean, you could see the brain damage, but it's a part of your brain that could handle it. In fact there's no lasting side effects. Like all of that was like you could say you got lucky, but I don't buy it.

Shireen: I don't either.

Micah: People began to pray as soon as we got in that car and everything started getting better after that. And I just believe that that was because people prayed.

Annie: So there are friends of ours listening who haven't had that experience with prayer.

Shireen: Right. We know that.

Annie: Certainly everyone has prayed for things that have not happened and have prayed for things and God has done miracles. So we've all experienced... if you have ever prayed more than once, you've experienced the spectrum of God answers miraculously and He answers in a way we don't understand.

Shireen: Yeah.

Micah: Yeah.

[00:18:04] <music>

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And now back to our Build Your Board conversation with Micah and Shireen.

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Annie: Well, I'm gonna spoil the ending. If you'd have quit praying last time the Lord didn't answer, what might have happened in this? How do we persevere in prayer when the story doesn't go that way?

Micah: I so often go back to Jesus's repetitive words.: Ask anything in my name and it'll be given to you, it'll be done for you. We have tried, I think, in kind of in a more rational world that we live in to qualify that statement. But what does it mean to pray according to God's will? What 'in Jesus' name actually mean? And I'm just not so sure that there needs to be a lot of qualifiers on it. I think our part is to pray, His part is to act. And we have to resist the temptation to keep score.

Annie: Wow.

Micah: We just have to keep doing what He invited us to do. So one of the things that kind of really came to the surface for us in a very lived way through this whole thing was when the doctor said, "You have clearly had a stroke. The clot still may be in your brain. We have to rush you into CT. And if the clot is there, we're gonna have to go right in and deal with it."

That is a terrifying thing to hear. Because basically what that means is this could be getting worse. It could get worse. We don't know yet. And I leaned over to Shireen and told her just... I think it was the first time in my life I said these words to her, "I'm scared." It wasn't the first time I've actually been scared. It's the first time I've ever-

Shireen: Said the words.

Micah: ...been scared enough to say it to her. And she prayed for me. We remembered a prophetic word that had been spoken over my life, but in-

Shireen: That was the Lord too.

Micah: That was. But in that moment, there was this sense of we've done what we can do, which is pray, and now we just trust. It's kind of the pray and yield concept. Like, I'm gonna ask and then I'm gonna yield. I'm gonna ask and then I'm gonna yield.

And in that moment there was nothing we could do but yield and decide that, Lord, if you want to, if I'm gonna slur the rest of my life, if I'm not gonna have good use of my left hand, if it's gonna affect my job, if it's gonna affect my ministry, if it's gonna affect my ability to be the kind of dad or husband I want to be, that's your call.

Shireen: It's not my decision to make.

Micah: It's not my call. And so we ask, but then we have to yield. And my heart goes out to all those people who would say, "Man, I can tell you the scorecard of all the things I've prayed for and haven't seen God really do."

We're just grateful that we have a different story. But there's been other things where He hasn't answered the way we wanted Him to and we chose not to quit. Hopefully, it's that combination of ask and yield that can keep people in that place of prayer and believing because it's not up to us to keep score and to even really understand the why behind everything. I think we ask and yield.

Annie: That is really helpful language. Ask and yield. Ask and yield. Can we talk for a few minutes about the nuts and bolts of building a prayer team?

Shireen: Yes.

Micah: Yeah.

Annie: Because 20 minutes in what I hope everyone is convinced of, what you have convinced me of... Before your stroke, Micah... I mean, I did this last fall to make a plan for this year, is having a set of people praying for you, whether you're in public ministry or not, whether you're... I mean, though I will say if you're in public ministry, this is an alarm episode for you. We are setting off an alarm for you.

Shireen: I would say so.

Annie: But if you're not, of course, people should be praying for you too.

Micah: Absolutely.

Shireen: Yeah. I think there's a difference... You have to recognize the people in your life. That's why I think what you're doing through this whole series is so great because different people play different roles in your life. I still reached out to my friends to pray for us. Like we still reached out to our family, our friends, people who love and care about us. And I knew they would pray.

Like I said before, there are people who they know they have a call to intercessory prayer where they are called to pray for people other than themselves, the church, the world, people in their lives. They listen to God in a way that maybe I don't. Like they have this call and this just heart connect to want to pray. So what we have learned is find those people.

Annie: How do you do that? How do you find them? How do you know?

Shireen: I think for me it's people who already have been saying, "Hey, you know we pray for you often." So there's like three people on our prayer team who they even were the ones first to tell us, "We pray for you often. I pray for your kids by name."

Annie: Wow.

Shireen: "I pray for this." And they check back in with us. "Hey, I heard you mention this, I've been praying for that. How's that going?" Or they shared an impression from the Lord or something. To me, those are the people—they're already doing it. I want them on my team.

And then what I get to do is I practice vulnerability with them and I get to give them things that I do want someone praying into with us, you know? So I think some of it is that. But then I think there has to be a level of trust that is unique and different, especially for people who are in a higher level of ministry or leadership, you know, these are people we trust and we would share things that we probably wouldn't share with a lot of other people because they can carry it to the Lord and nowhere else. And they'll carry it in the same way we will. And that to me is important and precious.

There have been people that he's been like, "Hey, let's, you know, think about this person or this person," and I will feel a check of like, "Hmm, I'm not so sure." So we're always in agreement on this because we know we're both sharing things and we both trust.

So I think that is a great place to start with who already is very faithful in saying, "Hey, you know I pray for you often. You know, when you mention this, how's that going?"

Annie: Is there a right number of people? Is there a set number you're supposed to have?

Micah: I think it's whatever you're comfortable with. But then you can keep up to date on your life. So there is this kind of tension you have to live in, I think, with the prayer team is you do need to have a number of people who you're willing to keep them up to date on what's happening. So whether it's like a weekly text of like, "Hey, here's what we got going on this week," or "here's how I'd like you to pray." Or a monthly text. However, you want to do it.

Shireen: Email.

Micah: Email.

Annie: Yeah. I do a monthly email. Almost monthly. I'm gonna do it this weekend, Shireen. I'm gonna do it this weekend. It's coming.

Micah: That brings to the second point is it's gotta be a number of people and the type of people you're willing to keep up with. If it feels burdensome you've probably gone too far.

Shireen: Yeah.

Micah: But then the other side is you need people who will also initiate the other way. So it doesn't feel like, Okay, if I don't keep up with them, I'm never gonna hear from them. So our team because we're not the best at always keeping them up to date, minute by minute-

Shireen: More in crisis.

Micah: ...they do a really great job of just the occasional, "Hey, I haven't heard from you for a while. Is everything okay?"

Shireen: "What can I be praying for? Here's what I've been praying for." You know, they check in.

Annie: Mine do too. But part of it was I did a DTR in the first email, right? Shireen and therefore Micah are also on my prayer team. And I did a DTR and I sent 11 people an email and nine people said yes, and one said no, and one didn't respond. So there

it was. And I asked them to commit for one year. That's what I asked for. Do y'all have a time window that you ask?

Micah: We haven't.

Shireen: We didn't do that.

Micah: We did set the expectation on the front end. Like you're saying, the DTR. Like, here's what we're asking of you, and would you be willing, why don't you think about it first? But we didn't put a time limit on it. I don't know.

Shireen: It's people here in our community, so we have close relationship with enough of them that if they needed to step off that we would be able to have that conversation. And that would be totally fine. No issues there if that needed to happen. But I do think that initial, 'Hey, this is what we're inviting you into,' is actually really important.

I love the idea of the timeline. For some people, that's helpful. But here's the other thing. I think if they already have that desire and heart connect, it just gets sweeter and more intimate over time because you've grown that trust and vulnerability in a very unique relationship. And it usually keeps going. I mean, I know Les has kept his, for the most part, same prayer team for years.

Annie: I predict not removing anyone next year. But part of my personality is I want everybody to have an escape hatch whenever they want it.

Shireen: That's true.

Annie: I like saying, "We're gonna do this for a year and then we'll re-up if you want to re-up. But you can also leave if you don't." Because I also don't want someone feeling like, man, I had bandwidth in '23, I don't in '24, but I can't tell her that.

Micah: Totally.

Shireen: Absolutely.

Micah: And I think that's where it has to be, not just an ongoing conversation about your life and how they're praying for you, but a check in reverse to them every now and then to say, How is this going? Are you still feeling called to do this? Has this worked? And even to get feedback from your team of like, y'all feel like y'all are hearing from me enough, too much? Am I bothering you? Does this feel life-giving to you? Does it feel like a heavy burden? To have those conversations from time to time just to make sure everybody feels good.

Annie: How often do y'all talk to your prayer team?

Micah: There's probably on two levels. I kind of have a little reminder to text my prayer team on a weekly basis, though I don't always do it.

Annie: Oh wow.

Micah: I don't always do it. But it's a quick text. And it might say, here's what I'm preaching on this weekend, or here's what we've got going on, feeling some stuff as a family. It's pretty high-level, pretty quick stuff.

Shireen: Just quick update.

Micah: But I do it every week. I mean, you could ask them. It's not as often as it should be. It probably shakes down to about once a month. And then also though, there are people that we just see passing.

Shireen: We see them often.

Micah: I mean, some of them I see at church. One lady almost every time I go to the grocery store, she's walking in her neighborhood and I'll pull over. You know, She'll gimme a hug and we'll talk and catch up. So we see each other in passing enough to where it's not just a text relationship. It's very organic. And that's one of the things we wanted. We didn't want it to feel kind of like this official team that kind of had this, you know-

Shireen: Like transactional.

Micah: Yes.

Shireen: We didn't want it to feel transactional. We wanted relational.

Micah: Yeah.

Annie: One of the interesting things y'all taught me that I had never thought about is you were like, you don't have to offer to pray for them. This does not have to be a two-way street. You are asking them to be a one-way street.

Micah: Absolutely.

Annie: That removed a ton of pressure for me. Because I was like, Man, I got the girls I disciple, I got my friends, I got my family, I got my circles. Shireen, I've got my

circles. If I'm building a prayer team, I can't feel the responsibility that I have to know as much about each of their lives as they know about mine.

Micah: Absolutely.

Shireen: Absolutely.

Micah: That's so good.

Shireen: I think we kind of presented that as well with our team. And they're great.

Annie: Totally.

Shireen: We've slipped into this really great relationship. Though here's the other thing. Like we are, or Micah is their pastor in a sense too. So there are... and me.

Annie: You're their pastors. That's true.

Shireen: We do care about them because we've built relationship with them. But as them on our prayer team, they know that role. And it does relieve a lot of pressure in that way.

Annie: One of the wildest story... I am not sure I've told you this story. One of the men on my prayer team, one morning I woke up and I thought, "I wonder if he has anything for me." And I didn't do anything with it. I just thought it. The next day, same. I woke up and I thought, "I wonder if he has anything for me." And I was like, "Annie, just send him a text. Just ask him."

And he says back to me, "Let me talk to my wife. There's something that we've been praying for and we did not know who the sentence was for, but I bet it's for you."

Micah: Oh my goodness.

Shireen: Oh my gosh.

Annie: And hours later, he texts me back and goes, "Can we get on the phone?" I said, "Yeah." And we get on the phone and he's like, this sentence we have had rolling around and I thought it might be for you, but then when you reached out... so even the Holy Spirit going, "Annie, ask Brad. Ask Him." And then him going, "Let me confirm this with my wife because I think this is for you." It is written at the top of my journal on the first page. It is such an impactful sentence.

Micah: Wow.

Shireen: I love it. So talk a little bit about your team hearing God for you and how you test that when it comes to you.

Shireen: I value that so much.

Annie: Me too.

Shireen: You know, we value that a lot. We always have. And I think that was part of why we chose some of the people on our team. We know they hear God. They have a natural prophetic gifting, whether it's dreams or visions or just words from the Lord. And we know that they're faithful and obedient to share.

So we've left it open. "Hey, anything you hear or feel or whatever, we are open to receive it from you." Sometimes they've shared scripture or different things. Just recently one of the ladies on our prayer team, she didn't know this. She was telling me a dream she had about me, Micah, and her and my daughter at a table.

And she had no idea the fact I have been praying specifically for my daughter with a couple of different things in her life. And she was the one in that dream. And she shared it to me and I just started crying.

Annie: I know.

Shireen: And I'm like, "You wouldn't know, but you've been so faithful to pray that God is gonna speak to you for me in ways that I couldn't have even verbalized to her." You know what I mean? I mean, there is value in knowing these people they will listen to God and they will be obedient to share it when they know the time is right. Also to share just wisdom, discernment. Having people who have that level of wisdom, discernment, and just commitment to pray, it is so valuable.

Annie: Your wisdom, Shireen, is so annoying because I want you to tell me when you have the dream, what the dream is, and very often you say, "Annie, I had a dream about you last night, and I think it's the Lord. I'm gonna wait on it." And I'm like, "Shiree, what did He look like? Shiree, what do we...?"

Shireen: Well, here's the other thing. I like to share that I had a dream. I've learned this... Okay, Lindsay, who we both know, Lindsay's really good at this too. Because for me, sometimes just even knowing that someone had a dream about me is an encouragement. It's like, "Okay, God, you still see me. You still see me. You still are... you still... I'm in your thoughts. I dunno what you're doing but I'm in your thoughts.

So I like to even share that because I'm like, I just want to encourage that person that God is putting you on someone else's mind. I don't know exactly-

Annie: You dream all the time though.

Micah: She does. All the time. It's so great.

Annie: I mean, I don't ever have it. It's such a gift. There is one dream... I mean, Shireen, you know this. And we'll tell this story at some point. It's not right yet. I'm gonna be annoyingly wise in the moment as well. But you had a dream about my career that I'm clinging to because we have not seen it yet. But in the dream-

Shireen: That was way early on.

Annie: The blue one.

Shireen: Oh, that was more recent.

Annie: The blue one where I'm wearing all blue.

Shireen: Yes. Well, part of the dream is Annie knows what the rest of the team doesn't know yet. So Annie has to call the team to what she knows. And I cling to it. I cling to it. We'll see if God does it. What I cling to right is God saying, "Annie, it is right for you to know what they don't and for you to see what they can't see. That's the right part.

Shireen: Right.

Micah: So good.

Annie: It is so helpful. It is so helpful.

[00:37:37] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to share about one of our amazing partners, [ZocDoc](#). You know that feeling when you finally find the thing you've been searching for on the internet, after spending hours researching and reading thousands of reviews, you find it and it checks literally all your boxes and has five stars, oh, and it arrives in 48 hours.

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Prose is an industry leader in clean and responsible beauty. All their ingredients are sustainably sourced, ethically gathered, and cruelty-free. If you're not a hundred percent positive Prose is the best haircare you've ever had, they will take the products back, no questions asked.

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Now back to our Build Your Board conversation with Micah and Shireen.

[00:40:35] <music>

Micah: To me, one of the interesting things about dreams is you could ask the question, why didn't you just give it to me? Like, why can't I [inaudible 00:40:45] about me? But I think the Holy Spirit is going to always actively work against isolation when it comes to the [inaudible 00:40:54].

Like her story from earlier about her migraines, like there are certain things the Lord's gonna do in community that He's not gonna do in the prayer closet. And it's not because He can't hear you. It's not because your prayers aren't strong enough. It's not because you're not anointed enough. It's simply because I'm reserving this one for community. I'm reserving this one for the body.

So every time Shireen has a dream about somebody, there's a connection there. There's opportunity for someone to receive from her, for her to receive from somebody. Every time your prayer team has a word for you, it just builds the body together.

Annie: Micah, will you talk for a second... will you pastor our single friends in building a prayer team? I have men on my prayer team that are married to other people. There's a wisdom there that I have to be thoughtful. Honestly, it's the reason I don't text my prayer team is because I wanted to be really thoughtful about engaging in this level of connection with other people's husbands. So I thought email feels like the way for me to control my own self. Right?

Micah: Yeah.

Annie: So talk about to our single friends who is a good idea and who isn't a good idea to have on your prayer team? How does it change when there's one of us deciding who it is versus two of us deciding who it is? Will you pastor our singles a little bit on how to build a prayer team?

Micah: Shireen probably can do it better than I, but I'll share a few thoughts. One, don't do prayer team dating, which is, "I like this person. I'm gonna invite them onto my prayer team and we can build..." That is just-

Annie: Like, don't do it. Even if you think God is saying do it, "Don't do it."

Micah: Ask them on a date.

Annie: Yes. Yes. Don't do it. That is right. You want your prayer team to pray for the guy that you want to marry or date. You don't want him to be in that group text.

Micah: Absolutely.

Annie: Yes, Micah, say that.

Micah: I think, and this goes really for anybody, but then I'll bring it into the singles, is all of us like survey the relationships we have in our life. Who is for you and who is given to prayer? Who's for you and who's given to prayer? Like that starts to narrow the field. It could be a grandmother, it could be a sibling, it could... My sister is... she's not on our official prayer. She is one of the most prophetic voices in our life.

Annie: Dude, she prays.

Shireen: She prays.

Annie: If we could all pray like Mallory Eldridge-

Shireen: I know.

Micah: I know.

Annie: ...the world would be low on problems and high on faith if we all would've prayed like she did.

Micah: So true. So true. So every birthday she sends me a card with a word in it for the year. So I think surveying your relationships and everyone does that. Who's for you and who's given to prayer? And then for the single people, I think discerning the why. Like why am I inviting this person onto my team? It's not to try to build an emotional relationship. It's not to build a connection.

These are people that you already have a healthy connection and good chemistry with. The Prayer team is not the place to cultivate something new. It's really the place to build on what's already there and just make it more intentional. Does that make sense? So it is just creating intentionality around their relationship that they already have with you and their heart that they already have in prayer. So I think having some wisdom there.

And then I think, and you do this so well. So many people can get away from this, but like just seek counsel from people around you. Here's who I'm thinking about. What do you think about this person? Do you feel like this would be a good step and a good person to fit the team and the dynamics is always a good thing?

So where the two of us can say, what do we think about this couple or this person? I think for the single person, who are some of your best, most trusted friends who might not even be a part of your prayer team. But they're a part of giving you counsel on how to build a prayer team? Who are the people in your life who could fit that?

Annie: That's another reason I wanted to do the one year is because I don't yet have a partner to bounce off who it is. I'm like, well, after a year, if this person isn't in my life anymore, for one reason or another, if this person.. I get to readdress and rebuild. That was one of my... Shireen, do you have other thoughts on particularly being wise relationally when you're building a prayer team?

Shireen: I'm very tight with what I keep and give away.

Annie: You're not tight with what you keep. You're tight with what you give away.

Shireen: I always want to tell people like, who are the people who are going to carry the things to the level of preciousness as you do? And are they going to carry it just... because you're sharing things that are deep in your heart, hopefully. Hopefully, if you get to that place. You're not just sharing, hey, pray for this. I mean, we do set pray for his sermon and pray for this thing we're doing with our kids, whatever.

But then there are going to be times where you're going to share these deeper parts of you, hopefully. I want them to pray for these deeper parts. I want these people to carry it just as preciously as me and God do. And that is so important to me. Very important.

So I would tell everyone, who do you know that will carry that same value alongside you? I think that's the most important thing.

Micah: It's awesome.

Annie: My email I send, as you all well know, my email I send the first little section is, here's how God answered since the last time you prayed. Because I also want y'all to know that things have shifted when you pray.

Shireen: That's encouraging. I always appreciate that about you. And we're not great at that. And I told him, I was like, "Annie always tells us here's what's changed." And I follow up. And I'm like, "We got to do that. That's helpful."

Annie: I mean, there was one situation at work that y'all were like, the front row watching it go from dark to light. I mean, it was wild. It was wild. So I always start with that.

And then I tend to give you like, here's what's happening in work, and here's what's coming on the calendar, and then here's my personal life, and what I want. So it's been really helpful to me, thanks to y'all's teaching me this last year of like, if I categorize everything, then when it's time to send the email the next month, I just pull up that email and go, "Oh, my gosh, that is resolved. That is still messy. That is, you know..."

I mean, I think a lot of New York happening was y'all praying it into the being the decision that we all need to make together.

Shireen: I love that. So that's when to be like, because I'm on your team, I experienced the other side. So now I'm like, Oh, we gotta do better with our team. And it's really good, because I enjoy hearing... that builds my faith. When I hear that something shifted for you, it grows my faith.

So I would tell people building a prayer team, don't say no for that person yet. You're inviting them into God's story, into something He's doing in writing. And they might need to be a part of it for their own growth, for their own faith.

I mean, we've been a part of other people's journeys, interceding for different people for healings for situations, whether they've happened or not, we've gotten to be a part of it, and now it's now a part of our story. And that's powerful.

Annie: I agree. That is such a gift. It has changed... I'm having this revelation as we're sitting here that I haven't sent an email in two months and every time I sit down to do it, I'm always like, "Oh, I'll get to it." It's on my to-do list all the time. And then I'm like, would the enemy love for me to quit sending that email? Because every time I send it, something shifts? Like here I am.

If there's one tactic he has on repeat in my life it is distraction. And I'm like, "Oh, my gosh, I wasn't going to take my computer on the airplane today to my speaking event. And now the only reason I'm taking it is I'm sending this email." So Shireen, hold me to it. If you don't have it by tonight, call me out on it. We got to send it.

Okay, what are we not saying about prayer teams that you want to make sure we say? Is there anything...? I mean, there's a lot to learn, of course, but...?

Micah: I mean, keeping... we're kind of saying it, but I'll just say it a little differently. Keeping them encouraged. So when they can hear what the outcomes are, when you can remind them and just thank them, you know, there might be one or two times throughout the year where you're not daily, weekly pastoring them necessarily but a time where you want to somehow say thank you.

Annie: Do y'all pay them?

Micah: No.

Annie: Do you give them a Christmas gift?

Micah: I'm sure there's some jewels in heaven.

Annie: The Lord pays them.

Micah: Exactly. No.

Shireen: I think we've written thank you notes in the past and maybe given gifts to people or if they've stepped off or things like that in different seasons.

Annie: That's good for me to know. Like, oh my gosh, I should send a Christmas gift.

Shireen: I think I would also say... I know we're talking about sharing like the things God did and cheering alongside but I would say share failures too. Not failures, but moments that maybe God didn't come through in the way we were praying because it's gonna connect us also in an important way.

I don't want anyone to shy away from that to think, Oh my gosh, I can only share the things when they pray and it actually happens. Like, we all need to walk through that, that feeling of my prayers didn't get answered in the way I think they should have been answered. We all need to walk through that.

And walking through that actually together is so much better than by yourself and in your own thoughts and disappointments. So doing that together, still sharing, like, it didn't turn out the way I thought it would. Because then they can also encourage you. But you can also walk through it together. I think that's really important, too.

Annie: That's really good. All right, y'all, there we go. I feel like y'all need to make some sort of resource that we can download and just like, Here's how you build a prayer team. So if you wouldn't mind-

Micah: You're doing it well.

Shireen: We're still figuring it out as we go as well.

Annie: No, it's amazing. Okay, the last question we always ask. Micah and Shireen, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Micah: So-

Shireen: One together or we can have our own?

Annie: You can have your own. The two become one except when it comes to fun. You can still be two.

Micah: Literally doesn't want me to be a part of it.

Shireen: That is not true.

Micah: So I'll say there's a lot of things that sound fun actually doing them sometimes I don't always have time for. But this summer we discovered... I know everyone in the world would probably say this. But again, we discovered the joy of family pickleball.

Annie: I knew you were gonna say pickleball.

Micah: We had so... Has everyone said that recently?

Annie: No, no. I mean, a lot of people are feeling it. Yeah, some people are saying it.

Micah: Yes. But it has-

Shireen: It's so fun.

Micah: It was so much fun. And all four of our kids, you know, with their ages, they can all do it.

Shireen: They can do it now.

Annie: Are y'all like putting a chord out in the street?

Micah: Not yet.

Shireen: Not yet.

Micah: We find place where-

Shireen: No, we just try to find local spots and look up ??? was friends too. And they love it.

Micah: It's amazing.

Annie: Hey, pickleball.

Micah: I understand why it's so addictive.

Annie: I would agree with that. But I would say right now we're in a sweet season where our kids have all kind of found their little niche, like things that they're doing and they love it and it makes me love it. Like we're not thinking about it from a practice and they're telling us how horrible it is. Like they can't wait to go to there.

Micah: Watching them.

Shireen: Yeah, watching them do the things they love right now. Like Leila is in show choir and watching her show choir is so fun.

Annie: She is so talented.

Shireen: My gosh.

Micah: It's amazing.

Annie: It's amazing.

Shireen: So it's fun. That's fun for me.

Annie: And you're raising Georgia Bulldogs out there in the middle of Nebraska cornfields. I'm so proud.

Shireen: It's easy when we keep winning national championships.

Annie: Nebraska is not having their best year yet.

Shireen: No.

Annie: So it is pretty easy. But it's nice to see that red black out there on your Instagram.

Shireen: We're trying.

Annie: I love you all. Thank you for making time to do this. And thank you for teaching me to have a prayer team. It has changed my life.

Shireen: I know. I'm so glad. Thanks for having us.

[00:53:02] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, aren't they the best? Shireen and Micah are just amazing. And listen, tomorrow we have a short quick conversation with Shireen and Micah that you're going to hear here on the That Sounds Fun podcast about what if you want your pastor to be on your board, what if you want your pastor to be on your board? That is an important question that we need to answer. So Shireen and Micah talk us through that tomorrow. So make sure you're subscribed, stick around here. That will be up for you on Friday on the That Sounds Fun podcast feed.

Make sure you're following Shireen and Micah, and thank them for being on the show. And if you are in Omaha, Lifegate is a beautiful church, and Micah and Shireen are incredible pastors. So I tell you to check it out. And maybe they're in the spring at the Women's Conference. Y'all come on. Wherever you are, y'all come to Omaha in the spring. It'll be fun.

And listen for a full list of all the additional resources for our Build Your Board series. Just go to Anniefdowns.com/buildyourboard. You can also get the guidebook there so you can take notes and work through all these questions.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. And follow along in That Sounds Fun Instagram @thatsoundsfunpodcast.

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you. I'll do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is going on a walk in Central Park. The weather is beautiful. So I'm gonna go do that at some point today.

Y'all have a great Thursday. We'll see you back here tomorrow for that bonus episode, that short little conversation with Shireen and Micah about what do you do if you wish your pastor was on your board of directors. We'll see y'all tomorrow.