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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.

But before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, [AG1 by Athletic Greens](#). Taking care of your health is not always easy, but there are some simple things we can do to help. And one of mine is AG1.

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Annie: Calling all my single friends, I want to personally invite you to come join the [Single Purpose League](#). Listen, I didn't think I'd be single in my 40s. I definitely didn't think I'd talk about it on the internet, but here we are. When I realized I had so many friends who are also single and navigating this season of life as well, I thought it was time we had our own little space to chat about it.

We've started a Patreon called Single Purpose League. It's a community of friends who want to talk about the good, the hard, the fear, the hope, and the heartache when it comes to being single in a little bit of a more private environment. Ultimately, together, we're gonna tackle the question, what is my single purpose? And what is my purpose while single?

When you sign up, your membership includes one Single Purpose League episode from me every month, one live stream a month, we're calling it our chapter meeting, 15% off of anything at shopannieffdowns.com, presale access to a special AFD event in Nashville on August 11th, an Advent experience that we are creating

just for singles that we'll release in Advent later this year, and a community of friends who totally get what you're feeling.

So, are you ready? Just go to patreon.com/anniefdowns to learn more about it and come and join us. That's patreon.com/anniefdowns. Fun.

Intro: Y'all, today on the show I get to talk with my friends who may be new to you, maybe not, but they are amazing, Audrey Elledge and Elizabeth Moore. They are incredible writers and best-selling authors of *Liturgy for Hope*, and now their brand new book, *Liturgies for Wholeness: 60 Prayers to Encounter the Depth, Creativity, and Friendship of God in Ordinary Moments*. Y'all, it is just beautiful.

I love sitting down with them at the Hephzibah House in New York City where I get to record That Sounds Fun while I am in New York. I love these gals so much. I love being friends with them. They are such a gift. You are going to love this conversation. So here it is me and my friends, Audrey and Elizabeth.

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Annie: Gals, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Elizabeth: Thank you, Annie.

Audrey: Thank you.

Annie: This is such a treat.

Audrey: It really is.

Annie: I think you both know this, but we have mutual friends, and my phone blew up about three months ago. People were like, but everyone did this: Do you know Adrienne Elizabeth?

Audrey: I didn't know it blew up.

Annie: It did. It was like multiple people. It was multiple people being like, "I don't know if you've... I was like, something is happening in the ethos of the world.

Elizabeth: Oh my God.

Annie: Then I looked at all the people we share, and we share a lot of things here in the city.

Audrey: The New York Christian community is something.

Annie: It is so small. It's a lot of people. There's a lot of believers here.

Audrey: It's thriving.

Annie: But everyone knows everyone.

Audrey: Yeah.

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Annie: Okay, so I'm going to ask you what sounds fun to you, because that's how we're starting things in our 10th year of the podcast. When you answer, will you lead with your name, just so as people are listening, they can connect your voice with your story? So why don't you start, Elizabeth? Tell us what sounds fun to you.

Elizabeth: Okay. My name is Elizabeth Moore, and what sounds fun to me is so simple, but truly being somewhere warm. Being somewhere warm sounds so fun. I went to Miami-

Annie: We're recording in New York.

Elizabeth: We're recording in New York City.

Annie: We're back in the Hephzibah House.

Elizabeth: It is a solid, well, woke up, it's like 30 degrees and sunny, which is great. All of January it was-

Annie: Sunny makes a difference.

Elizabeth: It was not sunny for a solid month. Now it's sunny, which we love. But yeah, being anywhere sunny and warm on a beach would be so fun.

Annie: And you just went to Miami. Is that what you said?

Elizabeth: Oh yeah. So I was saying I just went to Miami, which was a very fun getaway, but it was not quite the warmth that I desired. It was like 75 and cloudy and windy. And I was like, "Ugh, it's almost there. I need Brazil. I need San Diego."

Audrey: I need the equator."

Elizabeth: Yeah, I need by the Equator. So that sounds fun.

Annie: We don't want California this week when we're recording because it is boring, right?

Audrey: Oh, true.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Elizabeth: So tough.

Annie: Here's the problem in New York. I mean, I think there are no problems here. I'm honeymoon phase for sure. But your buildings that we live in, we don't control the heat. Is that true in your building? That's true in my building.

Elizabeth: Very true.

Annie: So I wake up and it is warm and I'm like, Oh, this is great. And then you say, "Siri, what's the difference?" And she's like, "Zero". You're like, oh, I'm so surprised because this-

Elizabeth: Building is hot, but I'm sweating inside.

Audrey: You're just at the mercy of your super-

Elizabeth: Which is like a thing that no other state or city, I feel like, deals with. I might be so wrong and uninformed by that, but I think it's only here.

Annie: I think you're right. Yes. So your inside is warm, but it's just the outside, it's getting places.

Elizabeth: Yes, it's getting places. It's commuting. It's getting on the subway. It's the wind.

Audrey: The wind hurts me.

Annie: The wind.

Audrey: The wind is so painful.

Elizabeth: Actually.

Annie: The sunny side of the sidewalk and the not sunny side of the sidewalk is like a 20-degree difference.

Elizabeth: It is literally so different.

Annie: I chase sun when I'm walking anywhere. I'm like, over there, over there, over there.

Elizabeth: That's a poem.

Annie: Oh my gosh, y'all are the poets, not I.

Audrey: Was that a poetic line?

Annie: Okay, Audrey, what sounds fun to you?

Audrey: Okay, I'm not even gonna like cap here.

Annie: Well done.

Audrey: What sounds fun to me is a co-writing session with Taylor Swift. As we record this she just announced at the Grammys last night that her new album is dropping this April, and it's called Not the Dead Poets Society. I always accidentally say that. In the 24 hours, I always say that.

Annie: Always. Yeah, yeah, yeah. As many times as I've talked about it.

Audrey: He's Tortured Poets Department or something like that. And I saw that and I said, wait a second. So a fun thing about Elizabeth and I is that our group of writer friends, one of our favorite things to do is free-write poetry together. Like someone brings a prompt, we gather, we just go for it, and then we share it with each other and just fall to the ground. Like such a good outlet.

So to be in on a co-writing session with Taylor Swift, not even like songwriting, just whatever she's doing when she comes up with words and turns of phrases, would love love. Would love.

Elizabeth: We're actually part of a poetry collective called Unfortunately, I Love You, which is so aligned with Taylor's new album.

Audrey: It's about unrequited love.

Elizabeth: It's about unrequited love.

Annie: Y'all are in a whole group about it?

Elizabeth: So when she dropped her album last night, we were like, What? Like she is our girl. She's a sad girl.

Audrey: She took all our SEO value.

Annie: No, she's only going to help. It's only going to boost.

Elizabeth: She's creating a moment for sad girl poetry, and we're here for it.

Annie: Okay. So is that how y'all started writing together at all? Is that how you started writing liturgies together?

Elizabeth: No.

Audrey: No.

Elizabeth: That's farther back.

Audrey: Yes, that is farther back. Shall we go there?

Annie: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Start me there.

Elizabeth: Okay, let's start there.

Audrey: So, well, at the very beginning is our friendship. So Elizabeth and I had two mutual friends, Jillian and Claire. If you're listening to this, we love you.

Elizabeth: They probably are.

Audrey: Thank you forever Jillian and Claire.

Annie: I thank you as well. I thank you for this and for this.

Audrey: They made so much happen. We owe it to them. Okay, so from my perspective, they had always told me, do you know Elizabeth Moore? Kind of like what they were saying to you. Like, she has this writing blog. You should really read her writing. I think you would-

Elizabeth: Oh, well, my writing.

Annie: And y'all already lived here?

Audrey: No.

Annie: Yeah, because who's blogging?

Elizabeth: I know. I'm like, who's reading my writing blog? Jillian and Claire are the only ones who are reading my writing.

Audrey: And then me. I became Elizabeth's biggest fan. This was in college. So a decade ago at this point. So when Elizabeth moved to New York, I had already been living here for one year. I moved in 2017. Elizabeth came in 2018 because we were connected and we got dinner with Elizabeth's parents in the Upper West Side at Jacob's Pickles.

Annie: Hey, I ate there for brunch yesterday. It's delicious.

Audrey: I mean-

Elizabeth: It's so good.

Audrey: It's so good. We'll taste the South. And we just like we're fizzing, just the budding friendship to come. You know when you meet someone and you're like, oh, you're cut from the same soul cloth?

Elizabeth: You are my person.

Audrey: It was that kindredship.

Elizabeth: Kindred spirit.

Audrey: Kindred spirit. So when Elizabeth moved to New York, we just connected over writing as well. We were friends and then we were like, "Oh, you like words?" "I like words." "You like reading?" "I like reading." So I guess that was the origin. And then I don't think we'd ever done a project together, like a writing project.

Annie: So hold on, slow me down a little bit. So you moved here in '17, and you moved here in '18. And did y'all immediately get in the same friend group, go to the same church? Was it like, did you say, can I be in your life?

Elizabeth: Yes.

Annie: That's kind of how it works here. I mean, that's kind of how it works here, it seems, is you're kind of like, Hi, you're the only person I know. Can I go with you? Fill in the blank. Everywhere.

Elizabeth: So Audrey had been here for a year before I had. I moved to New York on a hope and a dream. My dream was to work in publishing, which I did. I've since changed industries. But I worked in publishing for four years, which was so fun and amazing.

Annie: Which one?

Elizabeth: Penguin Random House for the vintage and anchor imprints.

Annie: Did you work with Tina?

Elizabeth: I did not work directly with Tina. No. She was over different imprints.

Annie: She's unbelievable.

Elizabeth: Is she with our book though?

Audrey: Yeah, I think she might be.

Elizabeth: Because book publication... WaterBrook?

Annie: Oh yeah, I bet you do.

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Annie: They're great.

Elizabeth: Book publication and my old job were both under Penguin Random House, but we're not connected at all.

Annie: Oh, fascinating.

Elizabeth: People were like, Oh, did that like help?

Annie: Is that how you did this?

Elizabeth: I was like, honestly, no.

Annie: No, I just decided the best ones.

Elizabeth: That is not how publishing works. Definitely not how publishing works. I knew too much. But I moved to New York without a job, just hoping that I would work in publishing. I had done this publishing course prior to moving to New York through Columbia, which was wonderful. But yeah, I moved here, and I was like, "I'm just hoping things work out." Connected with Audrey the summer before.

So yeah, I moved here, and I think my first night in New York, maybe my first full day in New York, I was like, "I think I got dinner with you." And Audrey invited me to her community group, which of course, I'm like saying yes to everything.

Annie: You have to.

Elizabeth: Went to her community group, Church of the City. I obviously didn't have a church yet either, so I just kind of dove in, got plugged in immediately, and it was, yeah.

Annie: Audrey, why'd you move here?

Audrey: On a dream. I just moved here with a dream in my pocket.

Annie: Yeah, that's how it goes.

Audrey: I had only lived in the South or Southwest, Tennessee, and Texas, before moving here.

Annie: Nashville girl.

Audrey: In the whole time. Nashville for grad school, Baylor for undergrad.

Annie: Oh, there you go.

Audrey: I was really in that bubble. And I don't think I was made for that bubble. It's a very specific pace and I was craving fast. I was craving being surrounded by dreamers and the biggest of the big. Not knowing at that point all the downsides to that as well and how you can find those pockets elsewhere. But I was just so fixated on Northeast, New York that I just, after grad school, just applied to every job I could think of in New York.

Just sent out applications to companies that sounded cool, where I had zero connections. Didn't even think of the word networking. I was just like, we're just putting it out there. Tried trusting God. It got really hard, because I was living with-

Annie: We tried this one thing.

Audrey: "I gave that a go, it didn't work."

Annie: "Met some friends. I tried trusting God."

Audrey: That was a mix.

Annie: "That wasn't it, so then I took back over."

Audrey: Then I took back over, that definitely wasn't it. So I went back to trusting God.

Annie: Yeah, there you go.

Audrey: But that summer, between grad school and moving to New York, when I was desperate to move to New York or Boston, I was considering that, too, I was doing interviews on Zoom before Zoom was really a thing, living with my parents. At night, they would go to sleep at like 8 p.m., and I would be downstairs in my PJs, just sending out applications.

And I work for SparkNotes, so I saw, they're owned by Barnes & Noble, I saw Barnes & Noble posted this editor position at SparkNotes that I was deeply unqualified for. I just sent out the application. I don't even know if I prayed over it. I just sent it out. I was like, "This sounds so fun." But I'm just, this sounds fun. I'm applying to everything that sounds fun.

So somehow I got the job. And so got the job, moved to New York like two weeks later. Knowing no one, having no true connections in the city. Didn't even know that I would be carrying groceries so far from my apartment. I got an apartment so far from the subway. Just didn't know city life. I was more fearless than I probably have ever been since or maybe ever will be.

It was one year of fearlessness that got me here. So now I look back at that time and I'm like, okay, thank you God for that one year of just protection over my spirit and just giving me this sense of bravery to move where I really shouldn't have gone probably. Like I should have, but I just did it knowing no one and it happened. And now I'm like, what?

Elizabeth: The fearlessness of youth just astounds me. I'm like, we did things that now I'm like, I would never do that again.

Annie: But why?

Elizabeth: I know, why? It shouldn't be that way.

Annie: It doesn't have to be that way.

Elizabeth: It doesn't have to be that way.

Audrey: That's a part of me that I want to reaccess. That fearlessness is something... I actually do believe I'll get it again. And that bravery and courage in the face of unknown.

Annie: I mean, you've been married for three weeks. So you kind of had some changes going on, so I think you have a little time where you have to jump back into fearlessness.

Audrey: That's true.

Annie: I had breakfast with a friend this morning and she pretty directly said, "Do you think God tells you exactly what to do or do you think you have choices?" So when y'all are thinking about coming to New York, was it your choice or was it a directive? Or is it some amalgamation of them both? Like, what did you think when you came here?

Audrey: So good.

Elizabeth: What a good question.

Audrey: So good.

Elizabeth: I think it was a choice. And it may not have even been a choice made for the right reasons, honestly. Because I remember before I left here, I was like, is my heart just filled with selfish ambition and my own goals? Genuinely, I was like, yeah.

Audrey: Low key.

Annie: Probably. You know what?

Audrey: Probably.

Annie: Is that what that is down there? For sure. Yeah.

Elizabeth: Absolutely, it is. And I remember bringing that to the Lord and being like, "God, I hate that this is in me, but it's so strong in me. I cannot go. Like I cannot." And I sought wise counsel and I remember kind of agonizing with some friends and being like, "If my heart is selfish, should I not go? Because I know it's in me. And I know there's also pure motives in me as well. I know there's a desire to steward my gifts and potential well for the Lord and to just be who I'm created to be, which is a words girl and a books girl and a publishing girl at the time." So, yeah, we love that.

But also I sensed the selfishness as well, and I just kind of made the choice. And I was like, "Lord, please use this move and use this season of my life to sanctify me." And He did. He is. And so that's my answer to that. It was an imperfect choice, and it was not lost on me. It was not a super holy, righteous choice.

Annie: What did you think? What was your choice?

Audrey: I love that question because I do think there are times when the Lord says, There are a few choices, a few different paths you can go down, and I'm with you whichever one you choose. When He's not actively saying no, I think we have this free will to make the choice. And then He's like, all right, we're going here, and I'm with you.

I do feel like New York actually was an obvious yes, because every other door is shut. So I think I mentioned Boston earlier. But there was a brief period that summer when I was applying where I was really fixated on Boston and had this cool opportunity for a job that I thought was going to work out, found my roommates that I was going to live with there, made plans to get a car there, all these things. I was very sure. I was like, Okay, Boston is where He's leading. And then it just slammed shut, that door.

I also applied to a few jobs in Texas as little safeties. Those slammed shut. And the same day I got the Boston rejection, I got the New York offer.

Annie: Wow.

Audrey: So it just felt-

Annie: You're like, is it my choice, Lord?

Audrey: Yeah. And it is weird when something... because prior to Boston, New York was really the dream. When I lived in Nashville for grad school, I had a picture of the Empire State Building framed above my bed.

Annie: Mine's the Flatiron.

Audrey: Oh yeah, that hits. The landmarks that are iconic. And it was just something I was like, one day this has to happen. So it had always been New York. So there are those sweet moments when your desire and a dream you have does align with God's yes. And those are like magic.

So while it has been filled with times of selfish ambition and my own mistakes and anxiety and fear, I do have to remember New York was a yes from Him. So I'm so glad we're talking about this. It's good to be reminded in a cold winter where New York is hard to live in, it was a yes.

Elizabeth: It is true. He did open the doors for us. And I'm even thinking, too, of He opened... gave both of us kind of our dream jobs out of nowhere in a city... That doesn't happen. People come here every day with the hope of that happening and it doesn't happen. So it is amazing to see, even though our hearts were in wherever the places they were in, I think we both wanted to do the right thing, and we wanted Him to lead us, and He opened these doors, and He's used it.

Annie: Let's skip a few steps here. Are you working day jobs now?

Elizabeth: Yes.

Audrey: Yes.

Elizabeth: I was at Penguin Random House, left that this past summer, and now I work for Ad Age, which is a news outlet for the advertising industry. So I am very much in the advertising industry. Who knew?

Audrey: She's an ad girl.

Annie: I'm so sorry I had to take you away from your job today.

Elizabeth: No. Please.

Audrey: It's honestly totally fine.

Elizabeth: It is amazing to be here. It is amazing to be here. But yeah, I felt like I needed to be in a job that was more suited to my giftings. Because even though I was in publishing and it was great and I loved it, my actual day-to-day was, I was using like 30% of my capacity. And I was like, this feels like not good stewardship of who I am. So now I'm in a role in advertising that is I book speakers for conferences. And so it's way more relational. I get to be more communicative. It's a good fit. That's really cool.

Annie: Can you tell us about your day job now?

Audrey: Yeah. So I still have the same one that got me to New York seven years later.

Annie: Sparkles! We love it!

Audrey: Shout out.

Annie: We love a little perseverance.

Elizabeth: Yes, we love that.

Audrey: So same job. I love it. It's really just working with classic literature, which is just so fun. Digging into Shakespeare and working with really smart writers who write about it well, smarter than me. I just accept their manuscripts. But it just really is a job that I do want to be grateful for because it got me to New York. It kind of was the ticket because I don't think... I did say I was fearless. I wasn't fearless enough to move here without a job. I don't think I would have done that.

Annie: I was going to be like, wait, I don't think... some people do.

Audrey: I told myself people do it.

Elizabeth: I was like, six weeks, I'm going to do everything in my power to get a job. And I'm either going to have a job or spend all my money trying.

Annie: There you go.

Elizabeth: And it's going to be worth it either way.

Audrey: And our parents are like, oh.

Elizabeth: We're like sobbing at home.

Annie: Oh. I think it's so important for people to hear where y'all are right now, because *Liturgies for Wholeness* is your second book out. *Liturgies for Hope* has done really well and you are still choosing to have day jobs as well. And this is also a job. So I think that's important for people to hear, because I did the dumb thing of like, I'm going to write books. And my first advance was \$7,000. And that's supposed to last you a year. Well, there's no world where... And all of a sudden I was like, we have a big problem.

Elizabeth: You gotta do more than that.

Audrey: It comes in installments.

Annie: Yeah, you get part of it when you sign, and then you get part of it way later. And there's taxes, and there's an agent, which there should be. So all of a sudden you have \$4,000 to last a year. Huh? Math thing.

Audrey: I know I'm a words girl, but I don't think the math's right.

Annie: Yeah. We have a problem here.

[00:21:35] <music>

Sponsor: Hi friends, just interrupting this conversation to tell you about one of our amazing partners, [Shopify](#). Think about this for a second. If you put 10 seconds on the clock, how many things can you name that are always growing? Okay, are you ready? your relationships, your skills, but also how about your business on Shopify? Because it could be.

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Okay, now back to our conversation with Audrey and Elizabeth.

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Annie: Okay, so now tell me, how did y'all get to where you were writing Liturgies together? Liturgies are really hard to write, by the way. I honor y'all so much.

Elizabeth: Oh my gosh, thank you. It was Audrey's idea, so I'll let you-

Audrey: Okay, I'll kick it off, the story. We just shared our story. We moved to New York not too long before the pandemic. So we were solidly living here when it became the epicenter of the pandemic, as it was known internationally, which is just a very scary phrase attached to the city you live in.

Annie: Was it scary?

Elizabeth: It was so scary.

Audrey: It was dystopian. It's known to be the city that never sleeps. All of a sudden it's sleeping. It's dead. It's like a ghost town. So I actually quarantined in Texas for a few months. I left. It just became really scary. And I know that's a privilege and I was so lucky to be able to do that. But my roommate left and I was like, I'm alone. I'm truly alone in this scary dystopian, like, feeling place.

There was just sirens all day, all night. You know, people are in such close contact in this dense city that people are getting sick left and right. So when I was on my way in the plane to Texas to quarantine, I actually just felt like this random idea of like, what if we, Elizabeth and I... she was the first person that came to mind as my most trusted writer friend. Like, what if Elizabeth and I wrote something for our church, Church of the City New York? Just something like a handlebar to hold on to in this desperate time.

And not because we thought we had the answers, but because I needed to write my own prayers and to be near God so badly because there was just so many unknowns. I didn't know when I was going to be coming back to New York. I bought a one-way ticket and people were just struggling.

Our pastor John Tyson said, now during this time is when a lot of people are going to be consuming a lot of bad information. So I was like, well, what sort of hopeful words could we put out there, even just for our church?

So I texted you on the plane that had Wi-Fi, and I was like, "Hey girl, what would you think of writing a bunch of prayers for our church and seeing if they would put them in the newsletter?" Like, that was as far as we dreamed. Like, what if we wrote a prayer for those worried for their physical health? Because that was the number one concern. People who are feeling stuck, people who are far from their loved ones, different things like that. So Elizabeth was game, thank you God. And we spent one weekend filled with desperation just writing these prayers.

Annie: Google Docs, I think?

Audrey: Google Docs. Yes.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Elizabeth: Is the placeholder title I put in our original Google Doc was *Liturgies for Hope*. Like, I genuinely was, yeah-

Annie: Not even thinking you're writing a book.

Elizabeth: Not even thinking. I was like, "This is such a weird, obscure title." I was like, "This is not it."

Audrey: We didn't even like the name.

Elizabeth: I didn't even like it. I was like, "Hut Hope feels like, right? And then we were like... I remember we were talking to our editor about the book title and we're like, well, it's definitely not *Liturgies for Hope*, but like, here's kind of where we started. She was like, No, that's the title. And we're like, Oh, okay.

Audrey: If you say so.

Elizabeth: She really believed it.

Annie: Did y'all sign two-book originally? Was it always a two-book deal?

Audrey: Yes.

Annie: It was always a two-book deal.

Elizabeth: Which was more than we... I mean, the whole story that it got picked up is insane. So the story is cool. So we wrote 11 liturgies originally, gave them to our church. And we had this budding creative community at the time that's now thriving. It's beautiful.

Annie: Oh my gosh, it's beautiful. I've seen stuff about it online.

Elizabeth: Oh my goodness, yeah. But at the time it was just called the creative team. And they were really encouraging us to use our creative giftings to serve the church. Because that's kind of a gap in church service organizations. There's the greeting team, and the children's ministry team, and all those are so important.

Annie: And the worship team.

Elizabeth: And the worship team, totally. But yeah, there's nothing usually, or there wasn't for us, a team beyond the worship team where creatives could use their gifts and bless the church with their gifts. So we were just kind of charged with like, be creative. Like whatever you're good at doing, maybe make something for your community and add beauty, add whatever. So we were like, okay, we write. I think that was kind of what sparked Audrey's idea.

So we wrote these liturgies, gave them to our creative team director at the time, was like, can you use these? She was like, absolutely. Punted them off to a website, like a software developer, website designer, and to a graphic designer, a UX designer, and they built a website for them, created a font to go on. It was beyond.

Audrey: They were real.

Elizabeth: We were like, what? We thought newsletter.

Annie: We thought y'all would cut and paste it.

Elizabeth: Comic Sans font. I'm like-

Annie: Oh my gosh, Comic Sans? It was a dark time. I feel like that was our greatest hope.

Elizabeth: So when we were told, like, oh, we want to create a website for these, we're like, oh, that's literally so cool. And then John Tyson, our pastor, got word of it. And he was like, Let's launch the website on Easter Sunday. We were like, even cooler. Like, cool. Down. So that was the idea.

They did launch on Easter Sunday. They got shared fairly widely on social media, I think. And then as legend has it, a pastor in London, King's Cross Church, what's his name? Pete Hughes read one of the liturgies aloud to his congregation, and there was an editor, a British editor in the congregation who heard the liturgy and was like, "These need to be a book."

She reached out to us, or she reached out to Church of the City and was like, "Can I be put in touch with the authors of *Liturgies for Hope*? So we got in touch with her, and she was like, Have you ever considered these being a book?"

There's part of us that was squealing, freaking out, like, no, we could never comprehend this being a book, that's too cool. And then there's my "I work in publishing" side, and I'm like, it's never gonna happen. I'm like, it's so hard to get a book deal. "Thanks, that's such a fun idea. No, we haven't considered it, but thank you." And she really championed us to try to get a book deal.

So we tried to get a deal in the UK first, and then those doors were closing. So she was like, "Maybe try to get a book deal in the US," and then I'll buy the UK rights. And that's where I was like, Thank you for this. This has already been adorable and so fun."

Annie: Oh my gosh, it's been adorable.

Elizabeth: This has been an adorable time with you. One does not simply get a book deal in the US. So I was like, "We just get an agent and you're good. We kind of laughed it off. But she kept pestering in the best way. We love her. Her name's Elizabeth Neep. She's our girl. But she was like, How's it going in the US? Any leads? And we were like, No.

So then, honestly, just to kind of say we did something, I emailed a friend of mine who was an editor at Convergent at the time, which is another imprint at WaterBrook. And I was like, "Hey, we've got this book idea that an editor in the UK is interested in, but we need to be agented in the US. Do you know any agents who'd be interested in representing this?" And she was like, "Yes." Immediately yes.

She gave us three names, connected us with three different agents. We took meetings with three agents all in the same week.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Elizabeth: It was crazy. We were like, "What is happening?" Yeah, serious. Which agent did you pick?

Elizabeth: Chris Park.

Annie: Oh, of course.

Elizabeth: Yes, we love her.

Audrey: Mama Chris.

Annie: Yes, well done.

Elizabeth: She nurtured this into the world.

Audrey: She absolutely did.

Elizabeth: From there, the rest is history. Chris took it from there and sold it to Waterbrook in a two-book deal.

Annie: Truly wild. Why 60 prayers in each of them?

Elizabeth: We were told.

Annie: I didn't know if it mattered to you.

Elizabeth: I don't think so. I think that was a good book length.

Audrey: I think it is interesting though because, you know, being told you need to write 60 prayers after you've written 11, like that's a lot more. But then we started brainstorming topics, and there were so many left on the cutting floor.

Annie: Even after these 120?

Audrey: Yeah. There's so many that were cut, which is so sad. We wanted to write all of them. We have a graveyard document, which is a little macabre. Liturgy graveyard.

Elizabeth: Liturgy graveyard.

Annie: Wow. I'm sorry, I just looked and I couldn't see because I'm not smart enough. *Liturgies for Hope* released when?

Elizabeth: Oh, November 1, 2022.

Annie: '22. So then *Liturgies for Wholeness* that came out last week is... so what is that? 18 months in between?

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Audrey: Yeah.

Annie: This one, *Liturgies for Hope* is coming into the world, people are experiencing it. They've already had the 11, now they're having the 60. And my guess is, correct me if I'm wrong, my guess is you are already riding these 60 before people are even giving you full feedback on the first 60.

Annie: That's so scary.

Elizabeth: It was wild. Thankfully it was a little bit blended. I remember starting *Liturgies for Wholeness* the summer before *Liturgies for Hope* came out.

Annie: Oh my gosh, before!

Elizabeth: Yeah, the summer before because it was due. This is crazy, Annie. Our manuscript for *Liturgies for Wholeness* was due in January and the book came out in November. And you know how crazy book launch season is. It's like the month. And then even the month beyond. We went to the UK in January to launch the book there in London. So we're working-

Annie: So she did pick it up?

Elizabeth: She did. Oh, she did. Yes, she did. Full circle. She picked up the UK rights. It's in the UK as well. So we were launching a book and writing a book all at the same time.

Annie: It's brutal.

Elizabeth: Which was brutal. But it was cool. It was a good challenge.

Audrey: We had each other, which is just one of our favorite things to talk about. We're holding hands right now.

Annie: Yes, for people who are not watching on YouTube.

Elizabeth: As I reach for her hand.

Audrey: The hand to grasp. Just, you know, first book, like, published book, traditionally together, you learn so much. You know, like, the ups and downs and just the admin tasks related to releasing a book. Being able to do it together and navigate those paths together. I now am totally ruined if I ever do it alone. Because also just like it's not only dividing the stress but it's also multiplying the joy. That's what we say.

Annie: Wow.

Audrey: Because you publish the book and you have someone to high-five that day. Like it's something you're sharing together.

Annie: People outside this don't realize that launch day is so anticlimactic. You just watch Amazon.

Audrey: Right. You might have a fun dinner with your family.

Annie: That's exactly right.

Elizabeth: But nothing big happens. It's just available to buy.

Annie: It's just available. It's out. It's kind of like your work of hustling the pre-sale-

Elizabeth: Totally.

Annie: ...is done. So you're like, yes.

Annie: Did you buy it? Yeah.

Elizabeth: And then people are reading it. So yeah, that's when you start to get feedback. But yeah, it's not immediate.

Annie: I mean, it's so sweet that... I mean, even when we walked into Hephzibah House, Penny who runs... I love Penny and Andy so much.

Elizabeth: We love Penny.

Annie: Penny literally stops you and says, "In every room in this house is a copy of your book."

Audrey: It's very special.

Elizabeth: I mean, that is so cool.

Annie: I've never written anything like a liturgy publicly. I don't think I've written one privately. That's not like me side saying something. I haven't written anything like this. Tell me about the weight it feels that you are teaching people how to pray, you are guiding them in prayer. Does it feel weighty? Or no, maybe it doesn't.

Elizabeth: I don't know. I'm curious to hear what you say about that, Audrey. I feel like sometimes it feels weighty. Mostly it feels freeing because I think our vision is we want to encourage people to be honest with God.

So I think in my view I'm not like, here are the words that must be prayed for this thing. It's like here is an example of genuinely crying out to God in modern-day language and being very real about how you're feeling, being very real about how you're experiencing something. And then looking to Scripture, seeing like, what does God say about this, what do people in the Bible say about this? Listening, quieting our hearts, listening for the Lord saying, God, like, what do you want to say about this? What do you wish we would say to you about this?"

We spent a lot of time in scripture and in prayer just listening and then wrote it down. So I don't think, in my opinion, the liturgy is not the prayer, but it is an example of if you don't have the words for when you're afraid for your physical health or for when you're having trouble falling asleep, here's a guide, here's an example.

But our hope is that people would take the liturgies and then make their own. And then just kind of get an idea of, oh, I can be actually so honest with God. I can actually be angry with him, or I can actually be so sad, or I can actually feel hopeless and tell Him that I feel hopeless in this book, *Liturgies for Hope*. But then I can turn to scripture and find hope, comfort, a promise, even if the feelings aren't aligning in the moment.

Annie: That is the gift of liturgies so much to me is no matter what I feel, the words are already there.

Audrey: Absolutely.

Annie: So if I am in a space where I don't know what to say about this, Lord, usually I can find, between the 120, I can find one that says, This is what I'm trying to say, so let me just say this. I think that's a lot of freedom, Elizabeth, because I'm afraid

sometimes people think liturgies are, if I don't say this word for word, the prayer will not work.

Audrey: Oh yeah.

Elizabeth: It's not magic.

Audrey: No formula.

Annie: Say that, yes. Talk about that. Because it feels like it sometimes in prayer.

Audrey: Totally, it does. We've always said we've never meant to replace anyone's prayers. Our greatest hope is that maybe it inspires someone's prayers, or just even if it just helps someone sit in the presence of God and say, help, or thank you, or... I think Anne Lamott has a book called *Help, Thanks, Wow*, which are three words or phrases that if that's what your prayer is, that's a prayer.

And honestly, in *Liturgies for Hope*, I would say half the liturgies I wrote were for me. So they were never meant to be someone's word-for-word devotional time. It was really written from my own experiences and words to either things I needed in the moment or things I had experienced. And it's not all this lofty, serious stuff.

Like we have one that's called *A Liturgy for Feeling Butterflies Around Someone*, which is about a crush, and God wants to know about it. He already does. But if you are sitting in the swirls and don't know exactly how to process, we've all been there, it's like a thing, then this is some stuff I felt and wanted to talk to God about.

Annie: I love that *Liturgies for Wholeness* has for when you're browsing through a museum. I'm going to take it with me to the Met. I can't wait.

Elizabeth: I wrote that one in a couple of museums, actually, just to get inspiration.

Annie: I think the overarching statement you're making in *Liturgies for Wholeness*, it is new out, but also in *Liturgies for Hope*, is this like, everywhere you are, God could be with you if you want. I mean, He is there, but He could be with you if you want Him to be with you in this, whether it's the crush or a museum. I like both in New York City. I would take either.

Audrey: We're down for both. Down to have a crush.

Annie: That's right. That's right.

Elizabeth: It's inviting.

Audrey: It's really sweet. Getting Him into washing the dishes. We don't have a liturgy for that. But we do have one for grocery shopping and napping. Like He can so be present in that. And it's about being aware of His presence too. You know, scripture is, you know, meant to be repeated. So our greatest goal was to take each line and be able to point back to scripture.

Annie: I love that. I love how at the end of a lot of them, if not all of them, I think all of them, you put the scriptures. So then when you're doing it, like, a liturgy for a new parent, and then it's like, okay, here are the verses you should... if you need to keep going.

Elizabeth: Yes, absolutely. Like, those are the scriptures we look to for inspiration. We hope people read those on their own, and the Lord will speak to us in our own way, in the way between us. He'll speak one-on-one through Scripture.

Annie: My hope today is that everybody who... I bet a bunch of my friends already have *Liturgies for Hope*, and they're just gonna get *Liturgies for Wholeness*. But if they get both today, if they're like, oh my gosh, new friends, duh, we need all of this in our house, what's the difference?

Elizabeth: Yeah, good question.

Annie: My dad loves when people say that.

Elizabeth: Yes, the cover.

Audrey: The color of the cover.

Annie: They go together beautifully, by the way. That's beautiful.

Audrey: A yellow and a tangerine. Thank you to our designers.

Annie: Yeah, they did a beautiful job.

Audrey: So I can take a stab at this.

Elizabeth: Take a stab and I can follow up.

Audrey: Yeah. So *Liturgies for Hope* was written very specifically, or the origin was written in the middle of the pandemic. So it really was centered on we feel suffering in

these areas, but we need hope. We feel hopeless, we need something to grasp onto, some sort of anchor. And then *Liturgies for Wholeness*, we started thinking less about specifically suffering and more about all the different ways we are a human being, the good and the bad and the in-between, and all the ways we live in communities filled with human beings.

Where are those areas where we all want to move toward wholeness, toward fullness? Where do we need to heal or where do we just need to invite God in so that we're experiencing the fullness of Christ? And so *Liturgies for Wholeness* is divided into eight or nine?

Elizabeth: Eight.

Audrey: Eight sections. So we have-

Annie: Yeah, you can let me know. Oh, it's Roman numerals, y'all.

Elizabeth: Well, I can do it.

Annie: Eight. It's eight.

Audrey: Okay, officially eight.

Annie: Wow.

Audrey: So there's prayers for the mind, for the body, for the senses, for the heart, for the soul, for the home, for the community, and for the world.

Annie: One more. Yeah, nailed it.

Elizabeth: She got it.

Audrey: We got it, we got it. You have those memorized for launch season. But really the first, I guess, five encompass the individual. So the mind, the heart. That's what you experience on a day-to-day basis or different seasons when maybe there's something that's broken, but you're a holistic person. So we do believe that God wants to move us and heal whatever we're going through.

We have a liturgy for anger. I think that's in the heart section or the soul section. We want to move from living in anger into living in forgiveness and freedom. So it's like that journey. And we hope a person, whatever point they're at on that journey,

from brokenness to wholeness or somewhere in between, can find something in the book.

And then the last three, for the home, for the community, and for the world, are about those things... We're not alone. We're not just individuals marching around just living our own lives. Like, who we're with, the neighborhood we live in affects us. What we read in the news affects us. So we have a liturgy for when you move to a new neighborhood. We have a liturgy for when you feel overwhelmed by the news. A liturgy for voting, which Elizabeth wrote, which is very apt for 2024.

Annie: We don't know who wrote what though.

Audrey: No.

Elizabeth: No. Only we do.

Audrey: Our moms can't even tell.

Annie: So y'all each write full ones and then do you kind of read over each other? Is that what you do?

Annie: I think I'd say small instead of tiny here.

Audrey: Totally.

Annie: That kind of thing?

Audrey: Exactly.

Elizabeth: Exactly. So we each wrote half of the liturgies. Our writing styles, and we knew this from the beginning from 2020, our writing styles are very similar. So they integrate really well. But yeah, we each wrote half.

Annie: Do you put any of them in front of your writers group? Are you testing with anybody?

Elizabeth: Yes. I'd say specifically for the topics that neither one of us have experienced personally. So in *Liturgies for Hope*, there's a liturgy for those who have been hurt by the church, which I know is a very real experience for many people that I haven't personally walked through to the degree that I know a lot of people have. So I ran that liturgy by a few people who I know have been through that. In the new

book, there's a liturgy for a new parent, and I'm not a parent. So I ran that by my brother and sister-in-law.

Annie: [inaudible 00:42:11] on these diapers.

Elizabeth: Yeah, exactly. I'm like, what does a new parent feel like? Like, what do you need? So for content that I'm not personally experiencing, I will definitely put in front of someone else first, yeah.

Annie: That's really sweet. Who is this for? Who do you hope reads this and prays these?

Elizabeth: I mean, is it cheating to say everyone? I would say... okay, here's who I hope reads it. I hope my... both of us. I think we've talked about this. Our greatest joy is when we hear a story of someone being like, I have never prayed a day in my life, or I have thought about praying, but never really thought that I could, or like, I've dabbled and then I gave it up and now I'm wanting to come back and then I picked up your book and I've found words to communicate with God. That's who I want to pick it up.

Of course, I want everyone to pick it up. People with thriving prayer lives, pick it up too. Love that. So good. But it's the best when someone is like, I'm connecting with God for the first time or the first time in a long time.

Annie: This is my favorite time of year to talk about books like this, because we're in the middle of Lent, and every mom is putting things in an Easter basket. And I'm like, let me tell you a handful of things that might be great in an Easter basket to mail to your college daughter or son. These are not feminine, necessarily, besides written by women, but men can read women.

Elizabeth: Yeah, totally.

Audrey: We love hearing stories from men.

Elizabeth: Men can read women.

Audrey: That's what I was going to say is I hope reads: men.

Elizabeth: Men.

Annie: Yeah. I hope so, too. I hope so, too. Because there are men writing liturgies that men and women are doing.

Audrey: Yeah, absolutely.

Annie: There should be women writing liturgies that men and women are praying along with. I think Easter baskets, I think college graduation, I think all that kind of stuff.

Elizabeth: So good. All good events.

[00:43:58] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation one more time to share about one of our amazing partners, [ZocDoc](#). Listen, we all know there are things in life that you have to compromise on. And sometimes when it comes to your health, there is no compromise. Okay, so don't go back to that one doctor who uses your appointment to catch up on their family group chat or just because they're available right now.

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And remember that link and pretty much every other link you could ever hope for in the world from us are in the show notes below or we'll send it to you every Friday in Friday's AFD Week in Review email. You can sign up to get that in the show notes below as well.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Audrey and Elizabeth.

[00:45:31] <music>

Annie: What does the rest of your writing life look like? Are y'all writing on something every day?

Audrey: That's so kind of you to assume I have discipline.

Elizabeth: I feel like we both have our own things that we're dabbling in. Just personally, I do make it a practice. I try to write weekly. So I started this practice right after college, actually, writing 800 words a week, just for myself. And it can be anything, kind of similar to like Morning Pages, if you're part of the Artist Day.

Annie: Do you do all in one sit?

Elizabeth: I do one sitting, I do 800, I try to. And that's genuinely just to keep the faucet on, like to keep words flowing, to kind of generate ideas that are maybe in my brain I'm not aware of. But the only regular writing that I'm doing at the moment, and I would love to do this more, is for Unfortunately, I Love You, the Poetry Collective we're a part of. We have a weekly substack that's released every Friday, and there's six members of the group. So every six weeks we contribute.

Annie: Is everyone here?

Elizabeth: Everyone's in New York, yeah, everyone's in New York. So every six weeks I contribute, or each one of us contributes a substack. So it can either be a poem, it can be an essay. And then for the events that we do. We have an event coming up in a couple of weeks or actually I think when this podcast comes out, it'll be over.

Annie: Oh, sad.

Elizabeth: It'll be over. But we've done three and this will be our fourth. So Audrey and I are currently writing for that. We're working on our stuff.

Audrey: Yeah. I feel like I'm in my poet-girl era where I'm returning to my roots. I've always loved writing since I was out of the womb, but I really grew to love writing in college. Just, you know, in your college English classes you're introduced to a whole plethora of authors and I was just so enamored by the old poets like Wordsworth who wrote with meter and rhyme and iambic pentameter and it was like this beautiful structure and boundary that you could be creative within. and something about the limits felt so freeing to me like this line has to have 10 beats. So you have to be so particular about your choices and really believe in the words you choose.

So I'm starting to return to that again where I'm trying to write sonnets and put words, like new words to these old structures. And not even to publish out in the world, just for my own self, like processing whatever I'm going through or

whatever I'm feeling into a little sonnet form or a haiku even, which is way easier to write, because it's three lines, is so cool. It's just so fun for me.

I've even started making it a spiritual discipline, where I'll write something to God, like in the old form of the love poems, like John Donne, Batter my heart, three-personed God. I feel like the old poets had a way... They just had a way of crying out to God like a lover. Yeah, just accessing that part of God as a lover through poetry is really cool right now. But no one's gonna ever see those, I don't think. I don't know.

Annie: Famous last words. We're both like, let me tell you what happened.

Audrey: We'll see how that goes.

Annie: I write really differently in the city than I write in Nashville. You all write differently here than you do other places? Can you feel New York affecting your writing? Wow. I know it's been a long time for y'all, so that may not be quite as...

Elizabeth: I think the thing for me is that I write in a different place. So I think for the first year or so, two years I lived in New York, I felt like I was writing differently because New York was still so novel to me. And now New York there are times definitely when if I'm like putting myself in a really artistic environment in the city that it can spark something new and it can feel different but now New York is my day-to-day.

The last time I really felt writing differently was when I was in London or when I was in Miami, you know. When I'm traveling now, like when I'm in a different... giving myself a different perspective.

Annie: Because now you have a house, like you have a home, all your stuff is there.

Elizabeth: Yeah, so it's hard for writing to feel different in New York because it's day-to-day, but I'm sure it has affected me.

Audrey: I feel like New York has more free, beautiful public places to write with inspiration. Like Central Park on a bench on a beautiful Sunday.

Elizabeth: I can't ever take that for granted. I think I'm like, I don't know, it's just normal now. I'm like, it should never be normal.

Annie: No, I get it. It's so cool.

- Audrey:** And like Hotel lobbies. I feel like are the secret.
- Annie:** That is the secret that people do not know. Like gorgeous hotel lobbies.
- Audrey:** You don't have to be staying there.
- Annie:** No. We don't need Wi-Fi because we're trying to write anyway. So don't give me a password.
- Audrey:** Has it affected your writing?
- Annie:** I mean, I'll be curious to see as this year goes on if it gets less novel. I mean, I've written a portion of every book here. I write better here. So I've never written a whole book here until this one that I'm writing this year. I mean, I'll write some in Nashville too, but this one is really like started here. This one is based here with writing in Nashville. And most of my books are based in Nashville with writing in New York. Does that make sense? So I will be curious. I'm the same now that I have a place where my stuff is, is it going to be less something?
- Audrey:** Sparkly.
- Elizabeth:** Yeah, who knows?
- Annie:** Well, not because it's still so new to me and I'm not here full-time.
- Elizabeth:** Right, exactly.
- Annie:** So I'm full citizen as we say.
- Elizabeth:** Preserve the novelty.
- Annie:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Audrey:** That's the thing about writing. It's impossible to nail down or predict when you'll be inspired. Like, it could be a grocery store run that will spark an idea and then you have a chapter written. So it really is like writing is so elusive. That's why I guess discipline is recommended.
- Annie:** Oh man, one of my favorite quotes is I heard a guy—I mean this was probably in 15 years ago at least if not more—at a writer's conference say, I only write when I'm inspired but I get inspired every morning at 9 a.m.

Audrey: Wait a second.

Elizabeth: Wow.

Annie: He was like, every morning at 9 a.m.

Audrey: I need that tattooed on my arm.

Elizabeth: Choose inspiration.

Annie: I choose it. He was like, "This is my job. Dentists don't wait until they're like, you know what? I feel like cleaning teeth today."

Audrey: Exactly.

Annie: "Here I go." You know. And the same is true for the three of us. Like a portion of your job and a portion of my job is producing written word. So if I just wait for inspiration, then I hope my publishers find that the book comes in six years to them.

Elizabeth: Totally. I feel like that's part of writing in communion with God. Part of it is writing in faith, is showing up and being like, God, I trust you're going to meet me at 9 a.m. when I may or may not feel inspiration, but you know what? You're going to be with me. And like, I'm going to write something and I'm going to try to listen to your spirit and it's going to feel different every day, maybe. But like, whatever I write, I'm going to just trust that that was what was meant to be written today.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. And 400 of those 800 words may not matter at all.

Elizabeth: Many of them, exactly. Exactly.

Annie: Because I'm the same way. I do word count. I don't do hours. Because I can sit there for two hours and do nothing.

Elizabeth: Exactly.

Annie: That won't really get us anywhere. Annie's brain does not respond to that particular carrot on a stick. The carrot on a stick is you got to do a thousand words today.

Elizabeth: Totally.

Annie: And then you can get up. You can do whatever you want.

Elizabeth: Totally.

Annie: But I mean, those last 200 can be like, so for lunch I'm going to make-

Elizabeth: Absolutely.

Annie: And then tomorrow I'll delete those 200 and pick up right there and keep going.

Elizabeth: Totally. But you've got to keep it flowing.

Annie: You do.

Elizabeth: You've got to keep it moving.

Annie: Do y'all see yourselves writing nonfiction essay kind of books at some point?

Elizabeth: That's our hope for our next book, which is TBD. But we would love to write a book of essays next.

Audrey: We would love to explore that form because the liturgies are more like poetry. They're not prose. I mean, they don't rhyme or have, you know, any of those. But they are prose.

Annie: These are a lot harder.

Audrey: Yes. So, yeah, delving into the essay space would be new territory for us, but I think it would also feel familiar. I think so. Because a lot of the writing I do for fun is also trying to explore things in an essay format.

Elizabeth: I started with essays, and I feel like liturgies was kind of—

Annie: Started with blog posts.

Elizabeth: I started with my writer's blog.

Annie: Yeah, girl.

Elizabeth: Which Audrey was one of the three followers.

Annie: I love it.

Elizabeth: But I love it and I still love it.

Annie: I miss it so much.

Elizabeth: I know. The blogging days.

Annie: Blogging was so good.

Audrey: Yeah, so fun.

Annie: Because you saw so many people's long-form day. And then Google Reader died. It saved the blogging world.

Elizabeth: It did.

Audrey: Yes. And attention spans.

Annie: I know.

Elizabeth: Yeah, but we're curious to dabble in Substack, which is I feel like today's kind of version of blogging.

Audrey: Are y'all doing that or just with the...

Elizabeth: Unfortunately, I Love You. Yeah, we are not yet, but we are actively about to.

Annie: Okay.

Elizabeth: It's gonna happen.

Annie: Okay, great. Tell us when.

Elizabeth: I don't know when, but we want to.

Annie: Tell us when you do.

Elizabeth: Oh, yeah.

Annie: That's so bossy of me. Tell us, Elizabeth, when. No, I'm just kidding. When you do.

Elizabeth: Yes. I'll tell you when, yes. But we would love to launch a substack or write on a substack exploring friendship.

Audrey: That's the topic.

Elizabeth: That is the topic that we are so passionate about that we've seen just be so fruitful in our lives that has just blessed us.

Annie: It can feel so hard.

Elizabeth: Yes, it can feel so hard.

Audrey: Our working title is Soulmates, actually, because, you know, there's so much emphasis placed on dating, marriage, relationships as being the soul fulfillers. But in reality, I feel like... and I'm saying this as having just been married. Like, I do feel like my friends are my soulmates. And my husband is my friend, too. So it's like, he's counted in that.

Annie: Yes, yes, yes. He's a soulmate, too.

Audrey: I heard this once, that when the word in the Bible that can roughly translate to soulmate is used, it's only in regards to friendship.

Annie: Wow.

Audrey: So that just is true. And I feel like New York has really been a sweet place, because it is hard to live here. You know, honeymoon phase. You know, we're going to protect that. We're going to protect the golden glow as long as we can.

Annie: Listen, I did have to try. I do have a fourth floor, no elevator walk up. I'm having my non-honeymoon.

Elizabeth: You are being initiated.

Annie: Oh, listen.

Elizabeth: That's tough.

Annie: Every package that arrives, I'm like, are you sure? Are you sure you meant to order that?

Elizabeth: Absolutely.

Annie: I have to go pick up and automate.

Elizabeth: No.

Audrey: Oh, bless it.

Annie: There's a lot that's terrible sometimes, but-

Elizabeth: You're feeling it.

Annie: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But it is honeymoon. I will be the first to say, it has not snowed on me. So I'm aware.

Elizabeth: Snow is lovely, and then it melts into dirty piles. That's when you're like, what?

Annie: So cold, and you still have to, like, go to a thing.

Audrey: You still have to make your way with your grocery bags in both hands and no car.

Annie: Right. No car.

Audrey: But yeah, all that to say, friendship in the city has really just been a lifeline. In 2018, about a year after I had been living here, I went through a really bad year of anxiety and just panic attacks that seemed to have no root cause. It just was like a maelstrom. And it was friends. It was friends who got me through.

And without friendship, you know, in the darkest times and also friendship in the lightest times when you're celebrating after really hard valleys, I mean, that's what makes life just so beautiful. And we're just really excited to write about it and explore friendship from like, yeah, the same sort of a perspective that gets applied to marriage. Like exploring friendship through our writing in that way.

Elizabeth: Yeah, like covenant friendship and that kind of thing where it's like, yeah, where we commit to each other. So we're excited.

Annie: I've talked about this before, but the most painful breakup of my life was a friendship.

Elizabeth: It was a friendship.

Annie: I've had some pretty bad breakups. Like I've had some pretty rough breakups. But a friendship, nothing like a friendship. Nothing. I can't even light a candle to the friendship pain with romantic breakups. I think part of it is there is this

commitment you make to your best friends, whether you say it or not. There is a, we don't ever have to break up. We're doing this forever. And then you aren't. And you're like, oh, what? Wait, what?

Elizabeth: I didn't plan for that.

Annie: I think there's so much uniqueness to calling friendships as important as they are and allowing people... I mean, it's what y'all are doing when you do soulmates. It's allowing people to go like, this friendship is very important to me. It is not romantic, but it fills a totally different place in my life. It is really important.

Elizabeth: Yeah, absolutely.

Audrey: It takes so much pressure off your romantic partner. They can't fulfill every bucket. They literally cannot. They just can't.

Annie: No.

Audrey: And your mom can't. You need so many different people in your life and thank God for that. Thank God that we can't be satisfied by a single person, except for Him.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. If the Lord meant for us to only love Him, He wouldn't have only made one of us. We wouldn't have been in a community. He knew.

Audrey: That is so true...

Annie: This is what He wants for us, too. So I think that's beautiful. And I don't know a lot of people who can write books together and still be friends.

Elizabeth: It's been amazing. People are like, how's it going? Is everything okay? And genuinely, I'm like, literally, it gets better. Every step along the way has gotten better. And I feel like I've checked in with Audrey, I'm like, is this as fun for you as it is for me? Because I'm doing great. So if I'm a terrible partner, you have to just tell me. And Audrey's like, Yeah.

Audrey: It's so fun.

Elizabeth: So fun.

Audrey: It's leveled up our friendship too into being co-collaborators and artists together and business partners and all these beautiful, new things. And just like I said before, sharing it divides the stress and multiplies the joy.

Annie: Man, I can't wait for people to get these. Is there anything we didn't talk about you want to make sure we talk about?

Elizabeth: Oh, I don't think so.

Audrey: We got lost in the convo.

Elizabeth: We touched on friendship. I know. I was so lost in the convo.

Audrey: Friendship is always important.

Elizabeth: We talked about friendship. We love that.

Audrey: Even talking about our writing is fun.

Annie: Well, thank you all for leaving your day jobs to come do this.

Elizabeth: Oh my gosh.

Annie: I'm so grateful.

Audrey: It is a delight to leave the day jobs.

Annie: So grateful. These are really important. I mean, I know we're mostly looking at *Liturgies for Wholeness* because it's new but they both are really important. So y'all have really given us a gift with these. So thank you.

Elizabeth: Thank you.

Annie: Can I just invite myself to hang out? Like, can I come to things sometimes?

Elizabeth: Absolutely. You're always invited.

Audrey: Yes.

Elizabeth: You literally come hang out with us.

Audrey: Yes, absolutely.

Annie: We're just supposed to say yes to everything. So I'm just publicly asking if I can be in your framework.

Elizabeth: And publicly we say you're invited.

Audrey: We say, what are you doing tonight?

Annie: Okay, great.

Elizabeth: Actually, we're going to get a drink after this.

Annie: Well, thank you. I'm grateful. And here's to us being friends in real life.

Elizabeth: Yay! Oh my gosh, so good.

Audrey: Oh, so fun.

Elizabeth: Thank you. Oh.

[01:00:03] <music>

Outro: Y'all, aren't they the best? Oh my gosh, listen. Trust me that we went to brunch Sunday after church. I just adore them. I think they are so fun and such good writers. I feel so inspired to be a better writer, a better poet, a better user of words because of Audrey and Elizabeth. They are just the best.

Listen, let me tell you, already at my house in New York, I have got their liturgy sitting by the bed. I just feel like that's such a good thing to have right by me all the time. So go get your copy of *Liturgies for Wholeness*. If you don't have *Liturgies for Hope*, just grab them both. But *Liturgies for Wholeness* is the new one. Go follow them on social media, tell them thanks so much for being on the show.

And I know they're doing some events here and there and everywhere, so just keep up with that as well. Go see them when they are in your town.

If you have any questions about this episode, just drop them in the Q&A box on your Spotify app if you're a Spotify listener, or you can send them to us on Instagram @thatsoundsfunpodcast. We'll try to answer them for you there.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, currently in Nashville. Anywhere you need me, that is where you can find me.

And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you, and I will do the same. Today, what sounds fun to me... Oh man, what sounds fun to me today? We've got a snack at the office that I am withholding snacking on till a little bit later. So what sounds fun to me are these little cookies that have chocolate and they have toffee and they have saltines. Some people call them toffee saltines. They are delicious. I usually have them at Christmas, but I'm about to have them today, so that sounds fun to me.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with our monthly recap as we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of That Sounds Fun. Every month we're recapping a different year with our buddy, Eddie Kaufholz. So get ready because on Thursday we're talking all about 2015. We'll see y'all then.