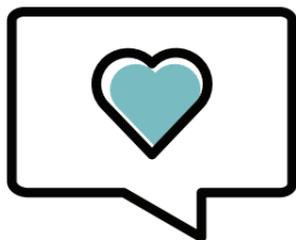


A GUIDE TO LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR





ASK FOR GOD'S HEART & EYES

You may be wondering where to get started or how to live out being a loving neighbor? This is the perfect time for a heart check as you endeavor to become a better neighbor in general to the people along the road of your life. Regarding those you may encounter who don't know Jesus, it may help to take a trip down memory lane to the time in your life when you didn't know Him either... Observe your intentions and motives and, above all, seek to show the love, compassion, and friendship Jesus displayed to you.

Activation: Here are some things to think about and a few prayer prompts to get you on the right track!

- Pray asking for God's eyes and heart as you see and interact with people.
- Take some time to reflect on when you were lost or distant from God.
- Ask yourself: "How do I see people?"

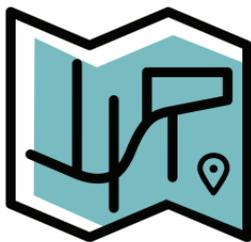


PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR

There are countless opportunities to impact your community, and prayer is one of those ways! You are not a part of the communities in which you find yourself by chance; God has you there for a specific reason—to live out His will for your life in that place. Begin to love your neighbor by praying for your neighborhood.

Activation: Here are a few ideas and prayer suggestions to kick things off. Walk your neighborhood while praying. Some ways you might pray are:

- “God, who would you have me see today?”
- “Lord, please deepen my love for the place I call ‘home.’”
- “Help me to see my neighborhood with Your eyes.”
- “How can I bless my neighbors?”



MAP YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

What does your neighborhood and daily route look like? Your neighborhood and the routes you take on a regular basis are an important part of your journey. These are the spaces where you can learn, grow, and make a major impact for Jesus! Map it out and keep good records of who is around you.

Activation: It could get difficult to keep up with all the details! Consider this:

- Physically map out your neighborhood. Who lives where?
- Save the details about your neighbors (i.e., Names, birthdays, interests/hobbies, etc...).
- Consider downloading the Bless Every Home app, which reminds you to pray for your neighbors daily.
- Consider downloading the NextDoor app, which helps neighbors communicate with each other, organize events and share information about what's happening in their community.



KNOW THOSE ON YOUR LIFE'S ROAD

Do you know who lives around you? This tip goes hand-in-hand with mapping your neighborhood. Do you frequent your local shops enough to catch a name or two of the owners and staff? If you aren't already, get familiar with who's around you. Engage and be intentional about connecting with the people on your "road."

Activation: Ask the Lord to highlight people who you should be more intentional with in your interactions.

- Choose your road/path (consistently) to create familiarity.
- What are your local businesses?
- Who are your local shop owners/associates? Take note of their names and hobbies.



START WITH FRIENDSHIP

Intentionality is key as you immerse yourself into your community and seek to be a loving neighbor to those along the road of your life. Not sure how you'll come across to others? No matter what you do, be genuine. Simply aim to be a friend! And while we know that building friendships takes time and effort, let that be what compels you.

Activation: In case you need a little help, here are a few ways to plant the seeds of friendship.

- Be a regular at establishments.
- Have lunch with others without an agenda.
- Learn the interests of those around you.
- Go out of your way to see people wherever you go.
- Strike up a conversation with the neighbor you typically only wave to.



LOOK RIGHT AT PEOPLE & SEE REAL NEEDS

You've heard the phrase "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."— and it's so true! As you go about loving your neighbors and the people on your life's road, seek to understand and care about what they may be going through. Listen for the details... Stand in faith for them and with them.

Activation: When we take our eyes off ourselves, we can see people more clearly. Try putting these tips in to practice.

- Call/text people on your road.
- Keep eye contact instead of multitasking when having a conversation.
- Ask, "How are you really doing?"
- Share what you already have.
- Do extravagant acts of kindness.



OPEN YOUR HOME

There's nothing quite like gathering intimately with friends at home. The conversations, the camaraderie, and sharing a meal can create an amazing environment for quality connections. Pray about the best approach to opening your home and allow God to lead you in how to make your home a place for others to feel welcome.

Activation: Of course, gathering doesn't always have to happen indoors. Here are a variety of suggestions for opening your home.

- Invite others into parts of your life (i.e., dog park, morning walk, etc...).
- Invite others over for some fun (i.e., game night, watch a movie, etc...).
- Host a casual weekly backyard gathering.
- Host a mini block party or porch gathering.



INVITE YOUR NEIGHBOR TO DO LIFE WITH YOU

What would happen if you began inviting your neighbors to connect more on a more personal level? Take interest in what they are interested in and create opportunities to get together.

Activation: Remember, friendship is a two way street. Ensure that you invite them into your world but also allow yourself to be invited into theirs.

- Say yes to invitations from neighbors.
- Share hobbies (i.e., book club, golf, or painting)
- Meet up at the neighborhood playground with your kids.



LEARN HOW OTHERS ARE VALUED

Philippians 2:3 tells us to, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves...” This will open doors for us to not only build friendships with the people on our life’s road, but it will allow us to exhibit Christ-like character to a world that can use a little more kindness.

Activation: Here are some practical ways to value others.

- Slow down and pay attention to the needs of others
- Create space within your schedule to be available to others.
- Offer intentional encouragement to others.



MEET REAL NEEDS

In getting to know the people in our neighborhoods and along our daily routes, we are bound to encounter people in need. Are you prepared to be of help? How will you respond, especially if you are facing a need yourself? Being giving does not have to be monetary, but that situation could arise. Don't fret—this is an opportunity to be resourceful in order to meet the needs of those God places on your road.

Activation: Being generous may take a bit of preparation. Here are a few ideas:

- Budget to give and bless others.
- Use your skills to help people. I.e: help someone write their resume, fix something around their house
- Refer a faithful friend... If you can't help, a good friend may be able to!



CHANGE YOUR APPROACH

We are all in different places in life. That means, where your faith is strong, someone else's may be weak, etc. This may be the perfect time for another heart check to remember who we are doing all of this for... We don't have to be flawless, but we do need to uphold a standard of righteousness, kindness and compassion so that we can point others toward our Father in Heaven. If our approach lacks compassion, we won't make much of a positive impact.

Activation: If you are finding it difficult to connect successfully with others, consider these things:

- Observe your responses as you connect with people (i.e., to sin, to personal differences, etc.):
 - It's not about correcting people. Remember, Jesus shifted the atmosphere when He arrived... He didn't shy away from it. That same boldness is in you.
 - Realize that you're different now, but you weren't always "a new creature in Christ". Stay grounded.
 - Remove "Christian jargon" from your conversations.
 - Intentionally improve listening and question asking skills.



DO A SERVICE PROJECT

Consider doing extravagant acts of kindness! Reaching out looks different in every environment but going above and beyond will leave a major impression. It can even create a ripple effect of generosity.

Activation: There is an abundance of ways to go out of your way for others and serve them with no agenda. Here's a bit of inspiration:

- Mow someone's lawn.
- Host a Food/can drive
- Organize a street cleaning
- Gather neighbors together to help out at a local animal shelter.



WRITE OUT YOUR STORY

So, what's your story? Where did God meet you on your road? Be willing to share because our testimonies are powerful! Someone may not have opened a Bible or have ever walked through a church door but hearing YOUR testimony can lead them to Jesus. We want everyone to receive the gift of salvation and to know that God is good! They may just need to hear it from a friend...

Activation: Be bold and share your story! Here are a few ways to prepare to share.

- Know/write out the short and long versions of your story.
- Know your story from a topical perspective (i.e., abuse, anxiety, etc...).
- Practice sharing your testimony with friends.
- Ask God for the opportunities to share.



INVITE YOUR NEIGHBOR TO CHURCH

Our ultimate goal should be to share the love of Jesus to the world around us. With no pressure, invite your neighbors and the people in your community whom you've built a rapport with to a service, special event or holiday service at church. If you are hosting church or Bible study at your home, invite a new friend over. Be a welcoming bridge between them and the Gospel.

Activation: Here are some simple ways to connect your neighbors to the gospel.

- Invite a neighbor to meet your small group.
- Deliver card invites in person for special church events/services.
- Invite your neighbor over to watch service online

