

THE ART OF NEIGHBORING

GETTING BETTER

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“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)

On the website, The Art of Neighboring (www.artofneighboring.com), the question on the homepage is, “What if Jesus meant that we should love our actual neighbors?” Well, the truth is, He did. When Jesus said to love our neighbors, He was telling us to love everyone, including our actual neighbors...the people who live next door to us, behind us and in front of us.

Here are a few questions for you:

- Do you know your neighbors’ names?
- Do you know their story?
- Do you know how to pray for your neighbors?
- Have you ever shared your story with your neighbors?
- When was the last time you had a conversation with your neighbors?
- Have you ever shared a meal with your neighbors?

For most of us, if we’re honest, we would probably have to answer no to most of those questions. Why? Because answering yes to those questions would take an intentional investment on our part. I know what you’re thinking (because I’ve thought some of the same things):

“Who has the time to get to know the neighbors?”

“It would be really awkward.”

“I don’t like my neighbors.”

“I never see them.”

“They’re different than us.”

“They are in a different life stage than us.”

“I don’t know what I would say or even how to start.”

(And I’m sure you could come up with a few more.)

Loving our neighbors means we have to be willing to make time in our schedule and to get out of our comfort zones.

I think one of the things that might help us to get better at loving our neighbors is if we saw the places where we live as “mission points”.

Why do you live where you live? Nice neighborhood? Good schools? Affordable? Need the space? Let’s ask a different question. Why does God have you living there? As followers of Jesus, we are God’s ambassadors (II Corinthians 5:20). That means wherever we go, whatever we do, wherever we LIVE, we are to represent Jesus to the people around us. We are to live our lives on mission (II Corinthians 5:18). That means at home, too.



So how can we love our neighbors?

Here are a few ideas:

- Introduce yourself to them
- Invite them for coffee in the front yard
- Have a front yard picnic
- Have them over for dinner
- Make them cookies and take them over
- Ask how you can pray for them
- Surprise them with a random act of kindness
- Host a block party
- Offer to help them with a project or maintenance
- Invite them to your Bible Fellowship Group party or fellowship
- Spend time getting to know their story

We challenge you to come up with some other ideas. Share them on social media with the hashtag #fbcallenneighbor. We would love to hear your stories.

Imagine if FBC Allen members decided to start praying for and reaching out to our actual neighbors. Imagine if we said “yes” to God and our homes became mission points where our neighborhoods could begin to experience the love of Christ. God is looking for followers, people who will listen AND do what He has asked. God loves us and He calls us to love others (I John 4:10-11).

How will you love your neighbor today?

