

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

Who is My Neighbour?

Our world is divided! People are hurting, and broken, fearful, stressed out, hateful and isolated. Many have no understanding of God, His love, His grace, His will, His word, His family and they are living a hopeless existence unless they have a personal encounter with Jesus.

Jesus wants us to realise that as people who have received His love and grace, we have also been commissioned to be neighbours to the world and let them know there is a God who loves them and a family they can call their own.

As followers of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is changing the world inside of us to change the world around us. As we go "Into Our Community Together," we can change our communities by blessing one person at a time, loving our neighbours by using the everyday practices modelled by Jesus.

Neighbouring well, or loving our neighbours was a big deal for Jesus (Matthew 22:37-40; Luke 10:25-37).

Do This

Jesus didn't want to embarrass the religious lawyer but empower him to be all he was called to be. He wanted the lawyer to understand one of his primary responsibilities was to love all people as much as he loved himself.

Jesus emphasises that love is an action that is to be shown to everyone. It is a verb! It is not just a word or a feeling. In fact, love is giving a part of you away; something precious to you that you give to another. It is what you do, not just what you say! Motivated by God's love for us, we respond to God's invitation to move into our communities, to share the love of God with others. Just as God sent His Son into the world (His love in action), He is sending us into the world as well. Jesus handed us the baton and He says, "Now you go and do likewise!" (Luke 10:37).

Who Do You Love?

Jesus gets right to the point and chose to use a Samaritan man to shatter any preconceived ideas of who a neighbour might be to the religious lawyer. Jesus then emphasises that it was a Samaritan man who would reach out and love the Jewish man in the ditch.

The point Jesus was making was no one has the privilege to decide who they will love and who they will not. The expert in the law tries to define his neighbour as someone who he can choose to care for. But no one gets to behave like the lawyer and define who their neighbours will be. Everyone needs God's love, and He desires to use us to share it.

Begin with Prayer

The preparation of our heart as much as of those we are reaching out to starts with prayer. Prayer changes our attitude towards our neighbour and can change their attitude towards us and Jesus also.

- + Prayer moves our heart to become aligned with God's heart for others
- + Prayer also shows us where it is that God is already at work in people's lives
- + Prayer of a listening form allows us to hear from God for others
- + Prayer releases the power and resources of heaven to earth
- + Prayer takes up the battle in the spiritual realm
- + Prayer first and foremost changes you to have a desire to fulfil Jesus' command to 'go and do likewise' to someone who may be so different to you.

Ask God to give you a love for your neighbours.

Praying for your Neighbour

Secondly, pray for what God wants to do in the lives of your neighbours. If you aren't sure, use these more general requests, drawn from Scripture:

- + That God will draw them to Himself (John 6:44).
- + That they seek to know God (Acts 17:27).
- + That they believe the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
- + That Satan is bound from blinding them to the truth (2 Corinthians 4:4).
- + That the Holy Spirit works in them (John 16:8-13).
- + That they turn from sin (Acts 3:19).
- + That they believe in Christ as Saviour (John 1:12).
- + That they obey Christ as Lord (Matthew 7:21).
- + That they take root and grow in Christ (Colossians 2:6-7).

Thirdly, pray with the conviction that God can accomplish great things in the life of another person (Ephesians 1:18-19).

Fourth, pray that the works of Satan in people's lives will be demolished (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

Who is My Neighbour?

The Samaritan meets the physical, material, financial and emotional needs of the man in his path. Our neighbours are in our path on a daily basis. Great things happen when we begin building relationships with those who live closest to us and then work out from there.

Can you name the neighbours in the houses that surround yours?

Our challenge this week is twofold:

1. Get to know who your neighbours are by name
2. Pray for each of them everyday

Discussion Questions

1. Read Luke 10:25-37. Share your response to the passage. What stands out to you? What is God saying to you through this passage?
2. Have you ever tried to define (even unknowingly via prejudice or bias), who gets your love and who doesn't?
3. Have you ever let a difference of opinion or a difference in appearance or culture become a blockage to you loving your neighbours?
4. Have you ever experienced a powerful breakthrough with your relationship to neighbours due to prayer?
5. Pull out your block map and share with the group how many neighbours you know? What could you do to get to know the names of just one more neighbour?
6. Spend time now praying for your neighbours as a group.