



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

NAME

DATE



START HERE

WHO & WHAT?

If you are holding this booklet in your hands, then it was created with you and your neighbor in mind. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you can love your neighbor...in simple and real ways.

This booklet is a tool to inspire, prepare, and empower you. Hopefully, the prompts and ideas in this booklet will lead you to ask questions and discover new ways of meeting and loving your neighbors.

By no means does this booklet hold all the information or answers. But we hope it serves as the spring board to naturally launch you into mission in the places you live, work, and play.

LET'S GET STARTED...

Ok, it's time to start thinking. But before you dive right in, invite God into this journey. The best plans and ideas are always led by our Heavenly Father.

Maybe say a simple breath prayer as you get started. Breathe in and say in your mind, "Father God," then breathe out and say, "Meet me here." Or come up with your own!

We believe in you. Get creative. Be brave. Trust God.



— BEFORE WE DIVE IN —

B.L.E.S.S.

ABRAHAM, JESUS, & YOU.

Towards the very beginning of the Bible, God recruits a man named Abraham to help introduce others to the love of God. God tells Abraham to follow God and as he does he will bless those around him. The promise is that Abraham's family will be made into a great nation, a great representation of God on earth and the conversation culminated when God tells Abraham, "...all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." - Genesis 12:1-3

Essentially God tells Abraham, follow me, and wherever you go, bless those around you. This is a mission we see fulfilled throughout the scriptures.

Abraham blessed those around him.

Jesus came to be a blessing to those around him.

Jesus sent his followers out to bless the world, too.

So how do we bless our neighbors? Our friends at Community Christian Church in Chicago came up with 5 simple practices that we can begin right now that will help you BLESS your neighbor and help people find their way back to God.



WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS?

B

BEGIN WITH PRAYER.

The “B” is for Begin with Prayer. We believe that prayer is both how you discover your mission as well as how you go about it. If you’re not sure who God is calling you to bless or where God is calling you to go to be a blessing, you can begin with prayer. And if you know the people or the place you want to bless, begin praying for those people and those places.

L

LISTEN.

The “L” in BLESS is for Listen. Sadly, most Christians are known for talking more than listening. If we truly hope to bless people around us, we must first get to know them. Any relationship starts with listening. We need to hear about their hopes, their dreams, and their challenges. Truly listening may be the kindest and most loving gift you can give someone. The “L” is for Listen.

E

EAT.

This third practice is our personal favorite, and it’s something in which many of us are experts—eating! There is something about sharing a meal together that moves any relationship past acquaintance toward friendship—faster than just about anything else we can do. And there are few ways we can better bless the people around us than by sharing a meal together. The “E” in BLESS is “Eat.”

S

SERVE.

And then we are convinced that if you will begin with prayer, listen, and eat, there is a good chance that by then you will have discovered how you can best serve the person or place to which God has called you. As a matter of fact, they’ll likely tell you how you can best serve them. The first “S” in BLESS is for “Serve.”

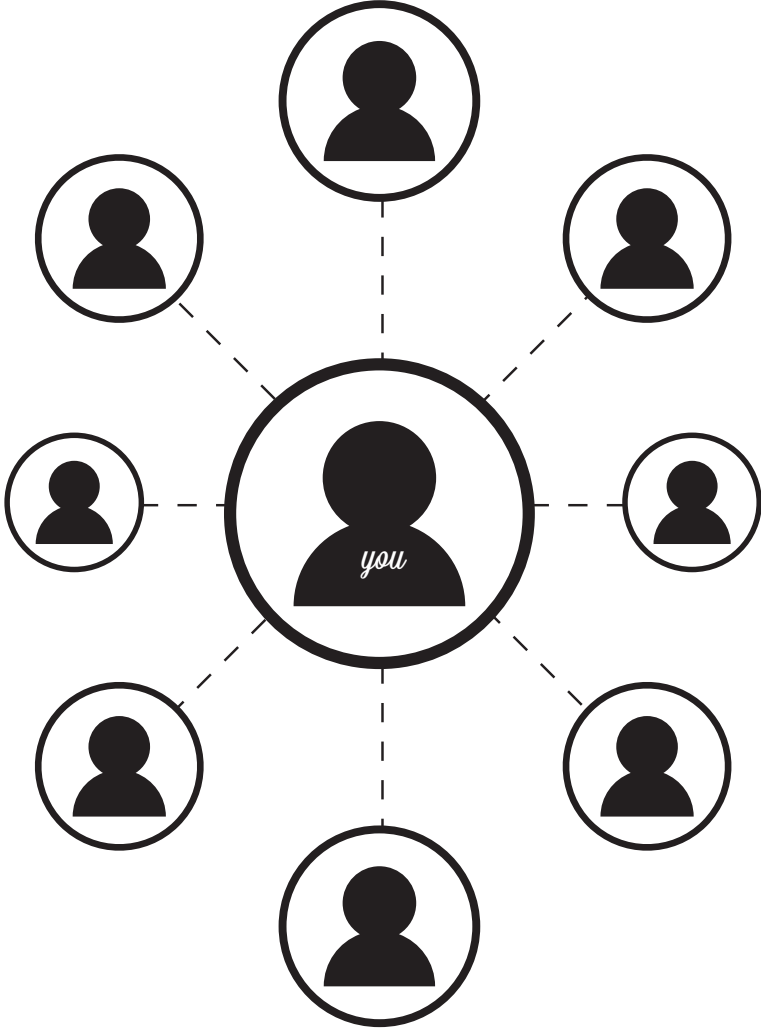
S

STORY.

And finally, our experience is that if you—Begin with Prayer, Listen, Eat, and Serve, then there is a good chance you will have the opportunity to share your story. Someone may ask you to explain what makes you different. It is then that you can tell them your story of how Jesus changed your life. The second “S” in BLESS is “Story.”

— THE FIRST STEP —

WHO IS YOUR NEIGHBOR?



The first step is identifying your neighbor. This might be someone that lives next door or in your neighborhood. But it also might be someone you work with, interact with, or see on a regular basis. Take a moment to think about who is around you — use the questions on the next page!

DON'T SKIP
THIS STEP!

WHO LIVES NEAR YOU?

Think about looking out your front or back door...have you met the neighbors that live in those houses or apartments?

WHO DO YOU INTERACT WITH AT WORK OR SCHOOL?

Think beyond your friends at work or your friend group at school.

WHO DO YOU SEE WHEN YOU "PLAY?"

For example: at the gym, a favorite restaurant, the library, the park, etc.

CHOOSE A NEIGHBOR!

While it would be great if you could serve & love every person you just named, it might be more practical to start with one person or family. If you have never met the people who live close to you, this might be a great place to start! If you feel like you have established relationships in your neighborhood, maybe it's time to invest more there. Or maybe it's time for you to view your work, school, or recreation time with a little more intentionality.



LIVES NEAR YOU

Go to page 6.



WORKS NEAR YOU

Go to page 10.



PLAYS NEAR YOU

Go to page 14.



— A FEW THOUGHTS —

VISION & INSPIRATION

WE ARE ALL NEIGHBORS.

The person that lives next to you is your neighbor. And you are their neighbor. The person that sits next to you at work is your neighbor. And you are their neighbor. The person that serves coffee at the shop you visit is your neighbor. And you are their neighbor. It may seem obvious...but it really is that simple.

And as people that have chosen to follow Jesus, it's our privilege and calling to be bearers of light, peace, and love in the places we do life. It's our hope that as you begin to pay attention in the places you live and go, that you'll see the doors that God is opening and you'll begin to enjoy being a neighbor.

THE POINT IS RELATIONSHIP.

If we approach this whole idea of loving our neighbors solely with the mindset of how we can help them and what we can give to them...then we are missing something big. Our desire is not to create a service initiative that prompts you to do something nice for your neighbor (like raking their leaves or walking their dog), even though an act of kindness might be part of it.

It's our hope that this leads you into relationship with the people around you. That a simple act of helping out might open a door to become friends. That a gesture of kindness might spark a connection that leads to both you and your neighbor being blessed by the relationship you share.

IT'S NOT JUST A ONE TIME THING.

We invite you to take this tool and let it begin a journey of seeing life through a new lens. Rather than serving a neighbor one time, we hope you begin to daily notice the people around you with new eyes — eyes that are searching for ways to love and serve all the people you cross paths with.

THE NEIGHBORING MAP.

Imagine the middle box is your home, your apartment or your dorm. All the other boxes are the eight houses or residences nearest you.

1. Write the names of the people who live in that house, apartment, dorm room, etc.
2. Write down some relevant information about each person. Something you couldn't just know by standing and observing from your front porch or creepily peaking out your window.
3. Write down some in-depth information you would know after connecting with people. (Career plans, dreams, hopes for their life, etc)


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Chart adapted from "The Art of Neighboring" by Pathak & Runyon



— NEXT STEP —

PAYING ATTENTION IN THE PLACE YOU LIVE

The following questions are meant to help you identify natural ways you can love and serve the people who live near you. Keep in mind that there may be things you need — and some relationships may start by you asking for help from someone else! Some questions won't apply to you, so just skip over them!



DO YOU KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS' NAMES?

- If not, how can you introduce yourself?



WHO IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD JUST HAD A BABY?

- Can you naturally offer something?
- If you already know them, could you take a meal? (either take out or something homemade)
- If you don't know them, could you take a small gift and card to the door and introduce yourself? (maybe flowers or a small stuffed animal?)



WHO HAS A PET?

- Do you like animals? Is there a way you could help from time to time?



WHO HAS KIDS?

- Are there appropriate ways to interact or invest in the kids around you?



WHO IS ELDERLY OR DISABLED?

- What might they need help with? (yard work, house chores, caring for a pet, etc.)



WHO IS AROUND YOUR AGE OR IN A SIMILAR LIFE STAGE?

- Can you invite them into your space or home?



ARE THERE SINGLE MOMS OR DADS AROUND YOU?

- How might they need help from time to time?
- Can you pick up a few things at the grocery for them, help with yard work, or help with a pet?



AM I ALREADY CLOSE TO SOMEONE IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD?

- Who might be going through a tough time and need some support? How can you help?



DO MY NEIGHBORS KNOW EACH OTHER?

- Can I do something to bring them all together?



ARE THERE OTHER BELIEVERS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

- If so, can you partner together to look for and meet needs?



WHAT SKILLS & PASSIONS DO YOU HAVE THAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO OFFER?

- Sports: Is there a league you can coach in? Or can you organize pickup games?
- Music: Can you teach lessons to someone around you?
- Cooking: Can you provide a meal for someone?
- Handyman: Can you help with projects — home maintenance, car repair, etc?
- Other:



DO YOU KNOW OF BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES, OR OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS HAPPENING?

- How can you help someone celebrate?



ARE THERE RUNNERS/WALKERS?

- If you like to run/walk, can you join them?



WHO HAS MOVED IN RECENTLY?

- How can you help welcome them to the neighborhood?



IS THERE A “FOR SALE” SIGN UP?

- Can you bless this neighbor before the move? (ask about their plans, take a meal, help with a house project, assist in packing, etc.)



IS ANYONE HAVING A YARD/GARAGE SALE?

- Can you stop by and meet or talk with your neighbor? (Yard sales are natural ways to connect and have a short conversation!)



IS THERE ANYONE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD WHO DOESN'T FIT THE SAME PROFILE AS THE MAJORITY?

- Examples: Race, Religion, Economic Status, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Social Status
- How can you help them feel loved and valued?



IS THERE SOMEONE WHO LIVES AROUND YOU THAT HAS SERVED OR HELPED YOU?

- Is there a small gesture you can do to show your thanks? (thank you card, homemade cookies. etc.)



WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS?



— NEXT STEP —

PAYING ATTENTION IN THE PLACE YOU WORK

The following questions are meant to help you identify natural ways you can love and serve the people who work or go to school with you. Keep in mind that there may be things you need — and some relationships may start by you asking for help from someone else! Some questions won't apply to you, so just skip over them!



DO YOU KNOW YOUR CO-WORKERS' NAMES?

- If not, how can you introduce yourself?



IS THERE ANYONE YOU DON'T KNOW WELL BUT WOULD LIKE TO GET TO KNOW?

- Could you take them to lunch one day? Or ask them to sit with you at lunch?



HAS ANYONE HAD ANY MAJOR LIFE CHANGES?

- Has there been a death in the family? Are they ill or is there someone in their family who is ill?
- What is something you can do to help or bless them? (provide a meal, write a card, ask how they are doing)



HAS ANYONE AT WORK JUST HAD A BABY?

- Can you naturally offer something?
- Could you take a meal? (either take out or something homemade)
- Could you take a small gift and card? (maybe flowers or a small stuffed animal?)



IS THERE SOMEONE AT YOUR WORKPLACE OR SCHOOL WHO DOESN'T FIT IN, IS DIFFERENT, GETS BULLIED, ETC?

- How can you help them feel loved and valued?



IS THERE A SPACE IN YOUR OFFICE (OR SCHOOL) THAT YOU MIGHT EAT LUNCH WITH A FEW CO-WORKERS (OR CLASSMATES)?

- How can you initiate eating lunch together?
- Can you start being more real & vulnerable in conversation and asking more real questions?



IS THERE ANYONE NEW TO THE OFFICE?

- Can you offer to take them to lunch with a group of co-workers?
- If they are new to Nashville, would it be appropriate to offer to show them around or give some tips?



DO YOU HAVE SUBORDINATES?

- How can you make sure to treat them with dignity?



***ARE THERE OTHER BELIEVERS IN YOUR
WORKPLACE — OR ARE THERE PEOPLE
RECEPTIVE AND/OR CURIOUS ABOUT FAITH?***

- How can you engage in conversation about faith?
- Is it appropriate to start a small group or bible study?



WHO HAS UPCOMING EVENTS?

- Does someone in your office have upcoming doctor appointments, job interviews, or tests? How can you show you care?



***DO YOU KNOW OF BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES,
OR OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS HAPPENING?***

- How can you help someone celebrate?



***DO ANY OF YOUR CO-WORKERS HANG OUT
TOGETHER AFTER WORK?***

- How can you join in or initiate a gathering?



***ARE THERE WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CO-
WORKERS AFTER WORK?***

- Do you have a co-worker who plays in a band or has a hobby that you can show up and support them in?



WHO CAN YOU PRAY FOR REGULARLY?

- Can you ask people if they need prayer or talk openly about praying for them?

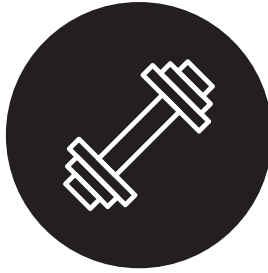


IS THERE A COWORKER WHO ALWAYS GOES OUT OF THEIR WAY TO HELP OR SERVE YOU?

- How could you acknowledge their kindness or express your thanks?



WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS?



— NEXT STEP —

PAYING ATTENTION IN THE PLACE YOU PLAY

The following questions are meant to help you identify natural ways you can love and serve the people who “play” around you. Keep in mind that there may be things you need — and some relationships may start by you asking for help from someone else! Some questions won’t apply to you, so just skip over them!



WHERE DO YOU GO FREQUENTLY?

- Ideas: Gym, Library, Sporting Events, Music Venues, Restaurants, Music Store, Coffee Shops, Bars, Book Stores, Grocery, Recreational Sports League, Retail Stores, Parks, etc.
- How can you get to know the people you see frequently at this place?



CAN YOU TAKE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE AN INSIGNIFICANT ENCOUNTER SOMETHING MORE?

- Examples: Someone bagging your groceries, making your coffee, running beside you on a treadmill
- How can you care for the person you are interacting with? Can you ask how their day has been? Or how long they have worked there? Or where they are from?



ARE THERE PEOPLE YOU SEE REGULARLY THAT YOU CAN GET TO KNOW BETTER?

- For example, if you play on a rec sports team, can you get to know your teammates better by going out to eat and asking good questions?
- Are there people you see regularly at the gym? How can you get to know them better?
- Where do these people need encouragement?



HOW CAN YOU DO MORE THAN SIMPLY COME IN AND OUT OF THESE PLACES UNDETECTED – AND INSTEAD BEGIN TO LOOK FOR SMALL & BIG WAYS TO APPRECIATE, ENGAGE WITH, AND ENCOURAGE PEOPLE THERE?

- How can you make this place a better and more positive place? How can you bless the people you interact with there?



WHO CAN YOU PRAY FOR REGULARLY?

- Can you ask people if they need prayer or talk openly about praying for them?



IS THERE SOMEONE THAT YOU HAVE FAVOR WITH?

- For example, does the manager of the gym enjoy talking to you? Can you bless them or other employees through this relationship?



CAN YOU INVITE SOMEONE TO JOIN YOU IN COMMUNITY?

- If you have gotten to know someone at your local coffee shop (or another place you frequent), can you naturally invite them into your community? For example, can you invite them to eat dinner with you and your friends at a restaurant?



WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS?

We'd love to know how this goes for you! If you'd like to share any stories of loving your neighbors with us, visit reunionmovement.com/loveyourneighbor and fill out the form. We are praying for you — praying that God would show his kindness, grace, and love through you as you naturally live and go!



— USE THIS SPACE FOR —

NOTES & IDEAS



South Reno 
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH