

The Art of NEIGHBOURING

Taking the Great Commandment Literally

Matt Garvin – April 10, 2016

What if Jesus meant we should love our actual neighbours?

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they met together to question him again. One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"

Jesus replied, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:34-40 NLT

Jesus invites us to live a life of love, for God and for our neighbours as much as ourselves.

"Call it what you will, genuine love, with all the discipline it requires, is the only path in this life to substantial joy. When I genuinely love I am extending myself, and when I am extending myself I am growing. The more I love, the longer I love, the larger I become."

M. Scott Peck

The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.'

Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

Luke 10:29-37 NLT

Jesus shows that loving our neighbours is a choice to...

- See people
- Feel compassion
- Act to meet their needs

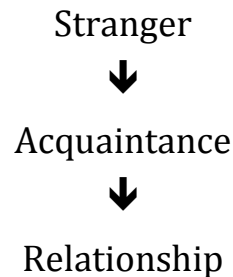
When we try to love everyone... we often end up loving no one.

It is not an accident you live where you do:

*From one man he made all the people of the world. Now they live all over the earth. He decided exactly when they should live. **And he decided exactly where they should live.** God did this so that people would seek him. And perhaps they would reach out for him and find him. They would find him even though he is not far from any of us.*
Acts 17:26-27 NIRV

The most challenging place to be the church can be the place where you live...

The Journey to Relationship



It is worth it...

Knowing your neighbours leads:

- To increase a sense of belonging and well-being
- To create social networks of support especially for children and youth
- To lead to social improvements
- To foster local economic development
- To positively affect our physical and mental health

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Jesus declares that the greatest Commandment is to love God with everything you have, and the second commandment, which he says is equally important, is to love our neighbours as ourselves. Would anything change for you if you were to order your life around these two priorities? What would change?
2. The parable of the Good Samaritan demonstrated that loving your neighbour was a choice that involved seeing people, feeling compassion for them and acting to meet their needs from your resources. Share about times when you have done this. What did you learn from the experience?
3. Pastor Matt posed the question: "What if Jesus meant our actual neighbours?" Of course the story of the Good Samaritan makes it clear that being a neighbour is more than that, but it is not less than that. Over the course of your life so far how have you gone at building connection with your actual neighbours? Discuss the highs and the lows?
4. Pastor Matt said "The most challenging place to be the church can be the place where you live." Do you agree? Why or why not?
5. Discuss as a group how you have gone in filling out your "Who is my Neighbour?" card. Did you become aware of anything as you tried to fill it out?
6. Building relationships is a process. How many acquaintances do you have amongst your neighbours? How many relationships?
7. The goal of block parties is to move acquaintances towards relationships. The goal of the Good Neighbour Project is to see a block party on every street in St. Albert. Discuss whether you are willing to sign up to either be involved in, or coordinate a block party. Why or why not?
8. Pray for your neighbours.