

# Love Your Neighbor

Transform a neighborhood by helping a homeowner to refurbish their residence you have created "good will." One way to use that good will equity is to reach the neighborhood. Begin to canvass the neighborhood going door to door leading with the fact you are helping one of their neighbors in need with their home.

## How do you start?

Survey your church members. Discover anyone who already has a burden for their neighborhood. Ask, "How long have they resided there?" "Have they built relationships?" "Are they perceived as reputable, kind, etc.?" This may be the place to start. They may not be the ones to lead a Bible Study, but they can be an eventual host and lead of outreach.

Regardless of where you start, prepare your congregation. Each neighborhood consists of the various entities that make up the church. Youth, elderly, all groups within the church make up those who are in the neighborhoods you want to reach. In order to identify with those in the neighborhood, these subgroups should be prepared to be engaged at some point. (The exception to this would be identifying a 55+ community).

## Strategy for winning a neighborhood:

**1) Map out the neighborhoods** you intend to reach. Send that map to all in the church so they can put it on their refrigerator to be mindful to pray. Maybe as you drive close to the neighborhood, take a detour and do a drive by prayer.

**2) Canvas the neighborhood** with prayer walking. Steve Hawthorne calls this praying onsite with insight. Just walk and pray the area asking God to give insight and therefore direction how to pray. Pray for the neighborhood as a whole, but also individual homes. You may see children's bikes, etc. which indicate children there. Are there schools close to the neighborhood? Pray that you will find favor with them and ask God to give you a person of peace that will receive you and be willing to start a Bible study.

I advise doing these measures as many times as you can and at least a month before approaching any neighbor. Of course, if a neighbor approaches you, engage them.

**3) Get everyone enlisted trained to write and share their testimony** and the gospel. This will be an ongoing process but a **MUST** for those who will be doing the canvassing.

**4) Go door to door.** You will just identify yourselves from your church and ask them if they have anything they need prayer about. Ask if you can pray right now. Then tell them that you are committed to continuing to pray for them. Ask them to commit to contacting you when God answers their prayer.

**5) Take these prayer requests** back to the neighborhood outreach team and pray for them. This is where you can engage the seniors at your church, asking them to pray for the neighbors.

**6) The alternative to canvassing would be to do a CareFest project.** This is a home that needs repairs, possibly that has been cited by code enforcement. Weeks before you do the project, canvas the neighborhood. Use goodwill to share with the neighbors what you are doing for their neighbor and how you are here for them. You may not be able to take care of all their needs, but you can at minimum pray that God will meet the need.

You can circle back to them and invite them to a barbecue that you will do around 12:30 at their neighbors' home that is being worked on to celebrate what has been done and get to know each other.

As you engage others in the neighborhood outreach, needs will arise, and others can help meet them. Perhaps a men's group could tackle a physical need once a month as an example.

Use other resources. Cities have neighborhood services. Somebody Cares has a **Directory of Compassion** (on sctb.org website as a free resource) organizations that may be able to help with needs your church is not equipped with.

**7)** Find a person of peace to **start Bible study/fellowship**. Rather than getting people to go to church, have the church go to them. It is ok to start with one person or family who welcomes you to bring the teachings of Christ into their homes. As this person is converted or renewed in their faith, they now become an indigenous missionary to reach their neighborhood by inviting others.

## **Other Outreaches that Can be Done:**

- Back to School outreach
- Movie night for the neighborhood
- Health/Job/Financial Fairs (help people with budgeting, investing, spending money, etc.)
- Easter and Christmas (give out small gift baskets to each home). Maybe include the Jesus film or a Bible.

What we are sharing is by no means exhaustive as others adopt, we want this website to be a platform where others share their ideas of what is working so others can benefit. This will be the collective wisdom shared so all can be more effective and encouraged in reaching our communities.