



## mission

**Our mission statement reads: Helping people connect to God and to each other in every neighborhood.**

We believe you do not go to church, but you are the church. God wants to use your life to bring others to a fuller understanding of Him.

In your everyday walk, you literally cross paths with people who live disconnected lives. They are disconnected from God and they are disconnected from each other. God has uniquely created and placed you to be His connection where you live, where you work or go to school, and where you play.

**You are exactly where God wants you to be even if it might not feel like it.**



# what the bible says

In John 20:21, Jesus tells the disciples,

“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (ESV).

Jesus came to show us how much our Heavenly Father loves us and wants to have a relationship with us. Jesus died on the cross so we could experience that love to the fullest. Our job as disciples (or people who follow Jesus) is to love people with the same love Jesus has for us. That is how we connect to God and to each other.

What does that look like? It could be sitting by the new kid at lunch, offering to show the new guy around at work or helping a neighbor bring in groceries. It might mean doing the dishes for your brother or sister so they can go play, or doing them for your spouse or roommate so they can take a break.

## The God we serve is a missionary God. He sent Jesus to live among us to redeem us and reconcile the world to Himself.

In The Message, Eugene Peterson paraphrases John 1:14 as, “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” As Jesus was sent into the world, He walked in step with God’s call through the Holy Spirit. Jesus reminds us in John 16:13 that as we are sent into this world, we have the same guide. When we understand the God of mission, we understand that we are called to model and imitate Him as His disciples.

### **Read John 1:1-18**

What do you learn about the character and heart of God from this passage?

If you are called to model Jesus as disciples, and are now “children of God,” as verse 12 says, what does this mean to you, and how do you model our Father?

“No one has ever seen God. But the One and Only is God and is at the Father’s side. The one at the Father’s side has shown us what God is like” (John 1:18, NIRV). Knowing what you know about Jesus, what do you think God is like?

Knowing you are to follow Jesus, and live and love as He did, what are some ways you can do that in your everyday life?

### **Read Matthew 5:14-16**

How do these verses connect with John 1?

God has forgiven us, and one way we show others His love is by forgiving them when we are hurt. Can you think of a time you were forgiven for something hurtful you did or said? How did you feel?

**Read Matthew 28:18-20**

The word “go” in this passage is better translated as “as you are going.” What are some ways you can make disciples as you do life with others?

What do you think makes someone a disciple of Jesus?

Are you a disciple?

How can you help someone else follow Jesus?

**Read Mark 12:28-31**

Dallas Willard has said, “Our neighbor is anyone with whom you are in close contact.” Do you agree with this statement?

Do the people around you (friends, siblings, teammates, etc.) feel loved by you?

Would they say you love them as much as you love yourself?

If you answered “no” or “maybe,” what can you start doing today to show them they’re loved?

Second only to loving God, Jesus tells us the greatest commandment is to “Love your neighbor as you love yourself” (Mark 12:31, NIRV). Write down the names of people you would consider your neighbors where you live, work or go to school, and play.

live

work/school

play

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What are some ways that you could better know and love them?



# getting to know & love your neighbors

## where you live...

Invite your neighbors over for a potluck and bonfire, and sit out on the front lawn.

Offer to rake or mow a neighbor's lawn, or clean their rain or street gutters.

Bless neighbors with a gift or act of service, such as spring cleaning, yard work, planting flowers or helping the lady across the street bring her trashcans in.

Invite your neighbors over to watch a ball game and eat your favorite snacks.

Organize a Halloween costume contest in your community, and include an area for photos.

Ask a neighbor kid to come outside and play with you and the other kids.

Invite your neighbors to participate in a food or toy drive to donate to the less fortunate.

Have a free gift-wrapping day for your neighborhood, apartment or dorm, and serve hot cocoa and cookies.

Throw a neighborhood carnival or block party and get everyone involved.

Host a holiday potluck. Invite neighbors who have nowhere to go.

Throw a craft party for the neighbor kids (and maybe their parents too).

Start a storybook time in your home for children and their parents.

Organize a community Easter egg hunt. In a neighborhood, dorm or apartment where there are no children, organize a hunt geared toward adults.

Invite your neighbors over for a BBQ, and arrange activities for the kids, such as a bounce house, croquet, slip 'n slide, etc.

Offer to walk your neighbor's dog(s) to give them a break.

Offer to take a wheelchair-bound neighbor for a walk on a beautiful day.

Share some of the produce from your trees or garden with your neighbors, or bring flowers.

Hand out candy on Halloween, and introduce yourself to those who stop by.

Start a lending library in your front yard or in a public place in your apartment building.

Look for needs in your neighborhood or apartment building, and ask if you can lend a hand.

Organize a progressive dinner.

Invite neighborhood kids over with their parents to carve pumpkins or make trick-or-treat bags.

Find out who the Veterans are in your neighborhood, and show them you appreciate their service.

Write Christmas cards or put together goodie-bags for the neighbors, and deliver them to each house, apartment or dorm room.

Sunday Sundae! Gather neighbors together for sundaes on Sunday.

Do something special for Mother's Day, like taking flowers or cards to neighborhood moms.

Arrange a Father's Day event, such as a basketball or baseball game, an annual jog or bike ride, or a breakfast with lots of bacon.

Invite neighbors to a place where you can BBQ and watch the fireworks together for the 4th of July.

Have a free car wash at your house, and ask the neighbors, including the kids, to help.

Plan a pool party or sleepover for the neighborhood kids. Ask some of their parents to hang out and help supervise with you.

Invite kids and their parents from the neighborhood to color eggs. Google “Resurrection Eggs” to show the real meaning of Easter.

Plan an outdoor movie night, and project a movie onto a garage or screen.

Offer to bring in the mail or newspaper when a neighbor is on vacation.

Create a neighborhood Facebook page or find an app that allows you to connect to others in your community.

When new people move into the community, help to welcome them with your neighbors.

Take walks or bike rides with neighbors.

Host a pancake breakfast in your front yard.

### **where you work or go to school...**

Invite someone new to play with you and your friends at recess, or to sit with you in the break room at lunch.

Pick up trash on the playground, on your campus or around your office.

Help someone who’s struggling with a work or school assignment.

Bring treats to your class or to work for everyone to enjoy.

Organize a board game lunch break or ping pong tournament.

Invite your fellow students or coworkers to help the less fortunate by collecting food for a food pantry or toys for a toy drive.

Have a Christmas party at work or school. You could even try a Mexican tradition, serving tamales and hot cocoa.

Give gift cards or mini poinsettias with handwritten notes to all of your coworkers or fellow students for Christmas.

Share some of the fruit from your trees with the people you work with or go to school with.

Find out birthdays for your coworkers or fellow students, and do something to celebrate each of them.

### **where you play...**

Bring a snack to the park to share with the other kids.

Head to the pumpkin patch together.

Send a text, email or a card to thank people for being in your life.

Invite people who have nowhere to go to come over for a holiday lunch or dinner.

Go caroling with friends, and hand out homemade cookies.

Invite your friends to walk down Christmas Tree Lane with you.

Throw a Saturday brunch, and ask people to bring items to share.

Celebrate the 4th of July and find a spot where you can all watch the fireworks together.

Plan a service project that fits your similar interests. Example: If you’re on a baseball league, organize a cleanup together at the park where you play.

Find out birthdays for everyone and do something to celebrate each of them.

Head to a Minor or Major League Baseball game together.



# reflecting back

As you get to know your neighbors and be known by them, you will experience greater connection to God and to each other, as well as a newfound love for those around you.

What connecting opportunities did God reveal?

In what ways did this experience stretch your faith?

What do you think was the hardest part?

What can you do to make sure you continue to connect with your neighbors in the future?



THE WELL