

Welcome to the Neighborhood

Week 1 – August 22, 2021

Scripture: Genesis 12:2-3, Acts 17:26-27, 1 Kings 17:7-16

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Share an experience you had with a neighbor when you were younger. Were they people with whom your family interacted with or did everyone keep to themselves? How is your current neighborhood? Did you learn more about your neighbors in this past season as many of us were limited to our homes?

Read Genesis 12:2-3, Acts 17:26-27, and 1 Kings 17:7-16 together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

We are called to LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR and yet they are some of the people we know the least. How is it that God gives us such a simple vision and yet our neighbors are often more purely just strangers that we live near?

Share your thoughts about following questions:

1. The blessing is **Genesis 12:2-3** was for the Israelite people through Abraham. Did you notice it was not just for the Israelites? How do we often fall into the trap that we think God's blessings are just for us and the people close to us, and forget "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you"?
2. How similar is the vision of blessing in **Acts 17:26-27** to the original blessing given to the Israelites?
3. Mr. Rogers was quoted for saying, "The real issue in life is not how many blessings we have, but what we do with our blessings. Some people have many blessings and hoard them. Some have few and give everything away." How would you apply this thought with the backdrop of Genesis and Acts?
4. As you read **1 Kings 17:7-16**, consider how God uses Elijah to bless a widow who is in a neighboring community. How does Elijah move from being a stranger to a neighbor to this woman? How does he offer her value and encouragement when she was in a struggling situation? And how does God show His provision in a community that worshipped an idol (Baal, a god of rain) by providing for people in the margins?
5. How does this scripture challenge you to see your community differently? How does it challenge your calendar, time and availability? How would the vision for your neighbors change if you embraced the heart of God for blessing people, their need and their community?
6. "9 Square Challenge" – Consider writing on a sheet of paper the 9 names of the people who live around you and start praying for new opportunities for kingdom conversations.

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today for your neighborhood. Challenge each other to "notice your neighbor" differently this week. Challenge each other to "meet the needs" that arise in conversation. Ask God to "renew your vision" for the people around your community. Pray for open doors of conversation around the "9 Square Challenge."