

# The Art of Neighbouring



A missional study, based on the curriculum from the  
"Art of Neighboring" group, tailored to FBC

# Session One: The Call To Neighbouring

## Getting Started

Share about your neighbourhood and the types of relationships that you have with the people who live on your street or in your building. On a scale of 1 to 10, how “connected” are you with your current neighbourhood?

Play the video regarding defining our neighbours:

<https://vimeo.com/117428367>

## Discussion Questions

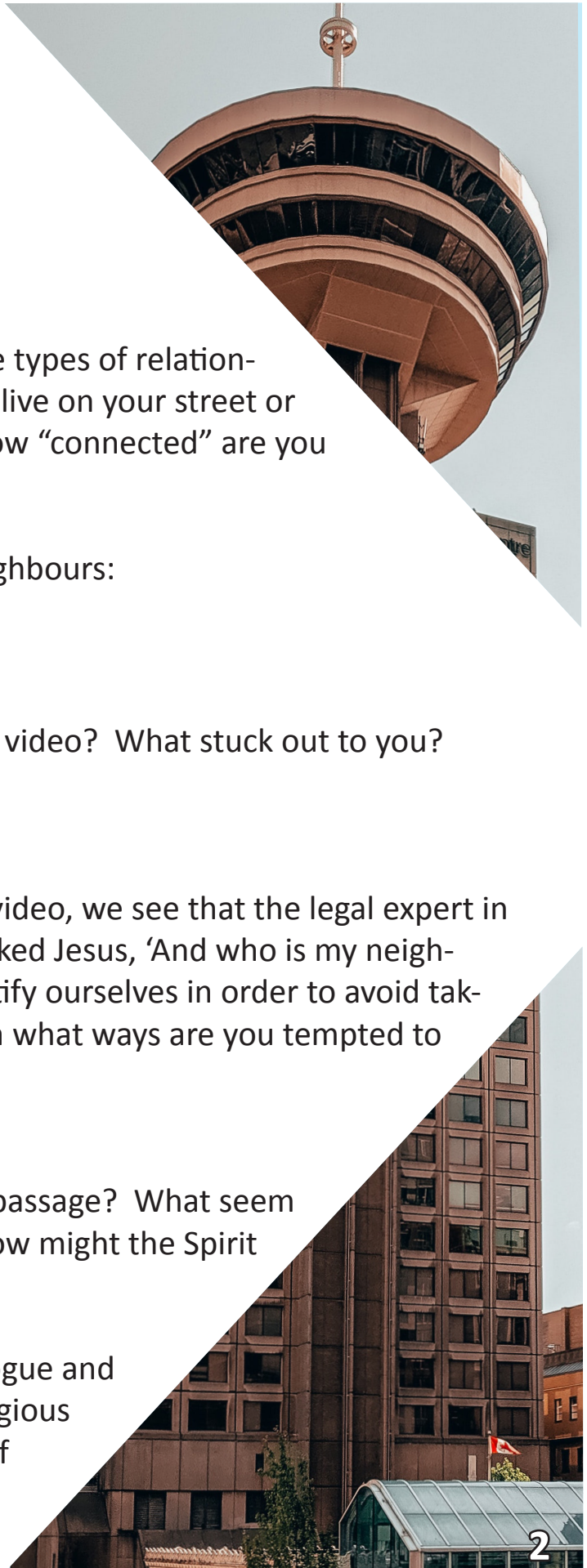
1. What was your big take away from the video? What stuck out to you? What encouraged you? What challenged you?

2. Considering the Lukan passage of the video, we see that the legal expert in Luke 10:29 “wanting to justify himself, asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’” How do we often attempt to justify ourselves in order to avoid taking the Great Commandment literally? In what ways are you tempted to make a “neighbour” into a metaphor?

3. Read Acts 17:16-27.

A. What jumps out at you from this passage? What seem to be the key words and phrases? How might the Spirit be speaking this passage to you?

B. The spirit leads Paul to the synagogue and the marketplace—the centers of religious and public life. The “marketplace” of verse 17 is the Greek word *agora* (ἀγορά); the agora was the hub of



public life, which was not only a marketplace, but a space for civic events, philosophical debates, child play, and athletic competitions.

What are the “agoras” in your neighbourhood? What are the gathering spaces of shared life where your neighbours naturally convene? If you can’t answer this question, consider an observational walk together!

C. Reread verse 21. How is contemporary Vancouver both similar and different to ancient Athens, in terms of the tendency to attach to recent? Based on your responses, consider: What are some helpful tips to get to know our neighbours, especially considering the trends and interests of Vancouver?

D. The Greek for “observed” in verse 23 is *anatheoreo* (ἀναθεωρέω), most literally meaning “again” (ἀνά) and “to observe” (θεωρέω). The sense is one of careful observation through continual contemplation. What are some practical steps you might take so as to continually observe and consider the life of your neighbourhood?

E. Looking at our passage from Acts 17 as a whole, consider: Why do we live where we live? Why has God placed us in our neighbourhoods?

### On Your Own

Take a few minutes to journal about your past experiences with neighbouring. How do you think God might want to stretch you over the course of this exploration?





## Moving Forward

1. Take some time to fill in the adjacent “Block Map.” Write the names of your neighbours by listing out the names of the adults and children of the 8 closest houses or apartment units next to you and pay attention to the blank spaces. Take a second and identify each of the neighbours and decide if they are a stranger, acquaintance, or relationship. Once you have done so, go around the room and share how many of the names you knew. Did you have any epiphanies as you did this exercise? What did you learn or feel as a result of doing this exercise?
2. Identify one neighbour that you are going to pray for during the next week. Take time to pray in the group for the neighbours that were mentioned.
3. Share one small “next step” that you feel God is calling you to take before your next gathering.





# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?



YOU ARE HERE

# Session Two: The Time Barrier

## Getting Started

What was the “next step” that you shared the last time we were together?

How did it go?

Play the video regarding the “tyranny of the urgent”: <https://vimeo.com/117428368>

## Discussion Questions

1. What was your big take away from the video?  
What stuck out to you?  
What encouraged you?  
What challenged you?

2. “When we think about becoming great neighbours and taking the Great Commandment literally and seriously, the greatest obstacle is time.”  
Has this statement described your life at some point? If so, in what ways?

3. Read Luke 10:38-42

A. Do you associate more with Martha or Mary?  
If you were going to defend Martha in that moment what would you want to say?

B. The word here for “distracted,” *perispao* (περισπάω), is literally “drawn away from being around.”  
What are those distractions that in the course of your day often draw you away from being around presence of Christ?

C. Acknowledging that at the heart of the art of neighbouring is the call to serve our neighbourhoods, how do we serve without being drawn away from Christ’s presence?





4. Consider the following myths often heard in our society:

- i. “Things will settle down someday.”
- ii. “If I can just get/do...”
- iii. “Time is money.”

Discuss how you see these myths impacting our culture: What do they do to our priorities, our pace of life, and to our relationships? Which of the three myths do you struggle with the most? How are your struggles manifested in your life?

5. Reflect upon the issue of margin in your own life: What could you say “no” to, in order to spend more time in your neighbourhood? What are the things you have to sacrifice to make that a reality? What could change in your life or in your neighbourhood? Why would it be worth it?

6. Imagine a dream situation by hypothetically removing all time barriers in your situation: If you had all the time in the world, how would you try to befriend and demonstrate your care for your literal neighbours?

### **On Your Own**

Look at your calendar and do an audit of how you have spent your time over the last two weeks. Reflect on how well your calendar is aligned with your priorities.



## Moving Forward

1. Do the “Block Map” once again. Write the names of your neighbours by listing out the names of the adults and children of the 8 closest houses or apartment units next to you and pay attention to the blank spaces. Take a second and identify each of the neighbours and decide if they are a stranger, acquaintance, or relationship. Go around and share how many neighbours you know by name and if you have made any progress since the last meeting.
2. Identify one neighbour that you are going to pray for during the next week. Take time to pray in the group for the neighbours that were mentioned.
3. Share one small “next step” that you feel God is calling you to take before your next gathering.



# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?



# Session Three: The Fear Factor

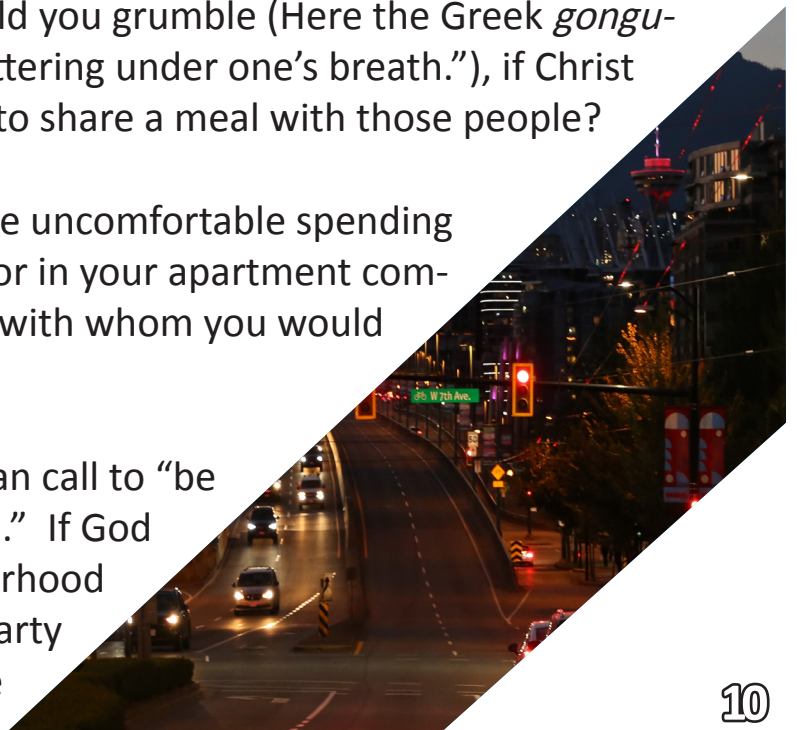
## Getting Started

What was the “next step” that you shared the last time we were together?  
How did it go?

Play the video regarding the “fear of the unknown”:  
<https://vimeo.com/117436824>

## Discussion Questions

1. What was your big take away from the video? What stuck out to you?  
What encouraged you?  
What challenged you?
2. How does the video comment that “social isolation is the antithesis of the second half of the Great Commandment” speak to you? How does it weigh upon your heart? In what ways might you be socially isolated from your neighbourhood?
3. Read Luke 5:27-32
  - A. Generally speaking, who are the “tax collectors” and “sinners” in your life? About whom from your city would you grumble (Here the Greek *gonguzo*, γογγύζω, refers to a “low muttering under one’s breath.”), if Christ called you to sit down at a table to share a meal with those people?
  - B. More specifically, would you be uncomfortable spending time with anyone on your block or in your apartment complex? Is there anyone particular with whom you would feel strange being seen? Why?
  - C. The video spoke of the Christian call to “be a part of the best parties in town.” If God called you to invite the neighbourhood into your life by throwing a big party at your place, what would be the





first objections likely to surface in your own heart?

4. Discuss the impact that the 24 hour media cycle has on your world view. How does the media aim to guide our perceptions, with the consequence—intended or unintended—often being fear?

5. What's the worse case scenario if you engaged your neighbours? Does knowing them increase the likelihood of your worst case scenario?

6. If you had to guess, who do you think might be scared of you? Why might that be the case?

7. What do you think are the main reasons people are often weary of their neighbours? Do you have any fears or concerns about the people in your neighbourhood? How would it be different if you knew their stories?

### On Your Own

Journal about a time that you overcame a fear, especially as regards trying something new. What were the steps that you took in completing that process?

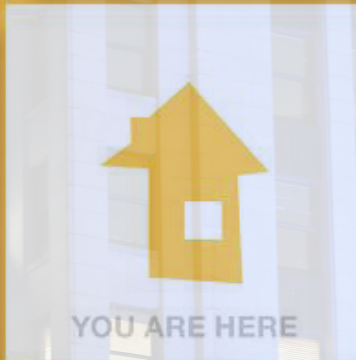


## Moving Forward

1. Do the “Block Map” once again. Write the names of your neighbours by listing out the names of the adults and children of the 8 closest houses or apartment units next to you and pay attention to the blank spaces. Take a second and identify each of the neighbours and decide if they are a stranger, acquaintance, or relationship. Go around and share how many neighbours you know by name and if you have made any progress since the last meeting.
2. Identify one neighbour that you are going to pray for during the next week. Take time to pray in the group for the neighbours that were mentioned.
3. Share one small “next step” that you feel God is calling you to take before your next gathering.



# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?



YOU ARE HERE



# Session Four: Motives Matter

## Getting Started

What was the “next step” that you shared the last time we were together? How did it go?

Play the video regarding our motive for sharing our faith:  
<https://vimeo.com/117428370>

## Discussion Questions

1. What was your big take away from the video? What stuck out to you?  
What encouraged you?  
What challenged you?

2. Respond to the video statement: “We don’t love our neighbours to convert them, we love them because we are converted.” How does this idea strike your heart?



3. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:3-8

A. If you were to demonstrate a “gentleness” among your neighbours, as of a nursing mother caring for an infant (verse 7), what might that look like?

B. What would happen if, in our interactions with our non-Christian neighbours, we shared the same spirit as that of Paul, Silas, and Timothy interacting with the Christians at Thessalonica: namely (verse 8), sharing with our neighbours not just the gospel but our own *psyche* (ψυχή)—our souls, lives, and selves?

4. Read Matthew 5:13-16

A. Are there ways in which you have chosen, whether consciously or unconsciously, to

be hidden (verse 14) from the life of your neighbourhood? Are there ways that the built environment (the architecture) of the place where you live encourages a highly private, hidden life?

B. Keeping in mind that directly before this Matthew text comes The Beatitudes in 5:2-12, consider: What are some “good works” (verse 16) of righteousness, mercy, and peace that you might be called to in your neighbourhood?

5. Instead of sharing your story first, have you ever tried asking others about their story? How can you focus on listening and create a safe place for honest two-way sharing? What kind of questions help people share their story at a deeper level? What’s the deepest moment you’ve ever had hearing another person’s story?

6. Are you comfortable sharing your story and telling people about the impact Jesus has had on your life? When did you last share your story with someone? What makes it hard to do this?

### On Your Own

Reflect on the biggest obstacles that exist for you to share your faith. Journal some of your fears and prayers. What have you learned through this whole process? Take some time and write about some things you are learning about neighbouring.





## Moving Forward

1. Take some time once again to fill in the “Block Map.” Write the names of your neighbours by listing out the names of the adults and children of the 8 closest houses or apartment units next to you and pay attention to the blank spaces. Take a second and identify each of the neighbours and decide if they are a stranger, acquaintance, or relationship. Once you have done so, go around the room and share how many of the names you knew. Did you have any epiphanies this time as you did this exercise? What did you learn or feel as a result of doing this exercise?
2. Identify one neighbour that you are going to pray for during the next week. Take time to pray in the group for the neighbours that were mentioned.
3. Share one small “next step” that you feel God is calling you to take before your next gathering.



# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?



# Session Five: The Art of Receiving

## Getting Started

What was the “next step” that you shared the last time we were together? How did it go?

Play the video regarding two-way relationships: <https://vimeo.com/117428373>

## Discussion Questions

1. What was your big take away from the video?

What stuck out to you?

What encouraged you?

What challenged you?

2. Read 1 Kings 17:7-16

A. How might it be significant that it is a widow through whom God works to minister to and provide for Elijah? Consider what you know about widows in the Bible, and perhaps do a quick Internet search on “widows in Old Testament times.” How do you think the widow felt in assisting Elijah?

B. Rabbinic tradition “reveals Elijah’s dislike of having to rely on other people. He would even take oil-lamps and wicks with him when he went from place to place, so as not to trouble others” (jwa.org)! How do you think Elijah felt to have to ask a widow for help? Why didn’t God just directly provide for Elijah?

C. Who are the widows, literally and figuratively, in your own neighbourhood? Ask God to reveal those who might be particularly lonely, and pray for the Spirit to bring to mind one or two faces.

3. What are your neighbours knowledgeable and/or passionate about? How could you enter into their world and allow them to teach you?





4. Are you good at allowing other people to care for you? What makes it hard? How often do you ask for help from someone outside of your immediate family?

5. The art of receiving is not complicated; it's being aware of our own needs. It's about opening our eyes, then being vulnerable enough to ask and receive. What current needs do you have that a neighbour might be able to help you with?

6. How do you tend to follow society's culture of covering up weakness? Consider: How was strength and weakness portrayed in your family of origin? What did you subconsciously learn from your parents and siblings?

7. Do not lose sight of the fact that Zarephath (verse 9) was foreign land—a Phoenician city on the Mediterranean! How is God calling you to cross borders—the hall, the yard, the street—into to an unknown place to allow others to care for you?

### On Your Own

Take some extra time in meditation, asking God to reveal to you the points of need in your own life. Journal some of your thoughts regarding what it might look like for these needs to be met by individuals in your neighbourhood.



## Moving Forward

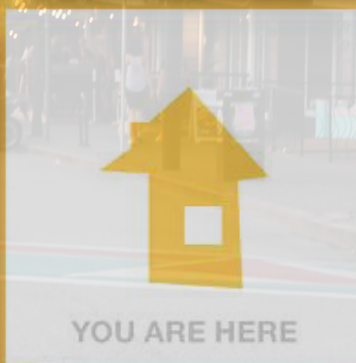
1. Take some time once again to fill in the “Block Map.” Write the names of your neighbours by listing out the names of the adults and children of the 8 closest houses or apartment units next to you and pay attention to the blank spaces. Take a second and identify each of the neighbours and decide if they are a stranger, acquaintance, or relationship. Once you have done so, go around the room and share how many of the names you knew. Did you have any epiphanies this time as you did this exercise? What did you learn or feel as a result of doing this exercise?
2. Identify one neighbour that you are going to pray for during the next week. Take time to pray in the group for the neighbours that were mentioned.
3. Share one small “next step” that you feel God is calling you to take before your next gathering.

**RIO  
THEATRE**

WE'DE BACK



# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?





# Session Six: Peacemaking

## Getting Started

What was the “next step” that you shared the last time we were together? How did it go?

Play the video regarding being a peacemaker:  
<https://vimeo.com/117428375>

## Discussion Questions

1. What was your big take away from the video? What stuck out to you?  
What encouraged you?  
What challenged you?

2. Consider the video truth: “For those of us who have decided to follow Jesus, we’re not allowed anymore to just write people off; because we have experienced the forgiveness of God in our lives, we have to love and forgive others.” How does this statement strike your heart?

3. Read Romans 12:14-21

A. Extending Paul’s ethic within the church to those in our neighbourhood beyond the church, consider: In your neighbourhood, who are the ones who are rejoicing? Who are the ones who are weeping? If you can’t answer this question, pray that God will be guiding you to know the stories of your neighbourhood, one or two at a time!

B. How does the church’s efforts to be peacemakers depend upon our “associating with/accommodating to people of humble estate”—the most literal translation of the Greek in verse 16b?



4. Share about a conflict you had with a neighbour. If you've not had one, have you witnessed one? What could have happened differently?
5. Have you ever become friends with someone that you once considered an enemy? How did this become possible for you? If this has not happened in your own life, consider realistic examples that you might have seen from literature, film, or television.
6. What happens over time when you fail to forgive people who have wronged you? Perhaps you have regrettably seen the consequences of such in the past in your own life or in the lives of family members.
7. Is there a conflict in your neighbourhood in which you could be a peacemaker? Consider that this conflict does not have to be particularly overt or antagonistic.





## Moving Forward

1. Visit [artofneighboring.com](http://artofneighboring.com).  
Consult the resources there, including information on throwing a block party and taking the next step.
2. Call your area pastor to share what you've learned!  
Let him or her know what you learned through this experience. Pass on the best story you heard from your group!



# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

