



**The Art of**  
**Neighboring**

**Life Group**  
**Material**

*Bracken Ridge*  
BAPTIST CHURCH



# The Art of Neighboring

JAY PATHAK & DAVE RUNYON

What comes to mind when you think about your neighbors? Maybe you don't know them very well or, if you're honest, maybe you think the lady across the street is a bit weird. For many of us, it can be tempting to keep our distance and mind our own business in our neighborhood. But is that really how God wants us to live?

As followers of Jesus, we've been called to love both God and our neighbors. It's easier said than done, but if we push past the fear, time barriers, and pride that can keep us from engaging with others, we can build deep connections with the people in our neighborhood and, most importantly, please God.

In this four-session series based on their book *The Art of Neighboring*, Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon help us focus on the people within our neighborhood and learn what it means to be a good neighbor. They discuss the importance of pushing through the uncomfortable feelings that come with communicating, investing in, and caring for the people who live near us. What would our communities look like if we took Jesus's command to love our neighbors as ourselves seriously?

# Accessing The Material

On the following pages you will find all of the information needed to go through The Art Of Neighboring Life Group Material. There are corresponding videos that can be accessed through our "RightNow Media" account with the church. If you don't have an account, simply go to [rightnowmedia.org/Account/Invite/BrackenRidgeBaptistChurch](https://rightnowmedia.org/Account/Invite/BrackenRidgeBaptistChurch). After creating an account simply search "The Art Of Neighboring" to access the 4 weeks or click [HERE](#) if viewing on your computer.

**rightnow** MEDIA

If you are unable for some reason to access the material through these different means, please simply email [office@brbc.org.au](mailto:office@brbc.org.au) or call 07 3261 5045.

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## **BIBLE EXPLORATION**

Truly understanding our call to love the people next door can be hard, especially considering the independent culture we live in today. Many of us work from home, have online friendships, and are too busy to meet new people. We're going to see how worrying about more than ourselves can put us on the track to becoming the type of neighbors God has called us to be.

Read Luke 10:25–37.

**After reading this parable, how would you describe its message in your own words? What parts of the parable can you identify with the most? Which character do you relate to?**

**How did the priest and the Levite react to the wounded man on the road? How do you see these same attitudes displayed in our culture today?**

Being a good neighbor can be uncomfortable because it can cost us and there is often risk involved. **How did the Samaritan react to the risk of taking care of the man? What did it cost him to do his good deed?**

**What do the Samaritan's actions show us about being a good neighbor? What could being a good neighbor involve?**

The Great Commandment is to love the lord God with all of your heart, mind and soul, and to love your neighbor as yourself. **What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?**

**How does knowing that we are to love our neighbors in the same way that we love and care for ourselves help you see the importance of serving others?**

**Considering the Great Commandment, how often have you loved your neighbors? How well have you loved your neighbors?**

Think about the neighbors in your own neighborhood. Consider the neighbors who have displayed burdens. **In what ways could you help out a neighbor who is struggling this week?**

**This week, how can you make yourself more available than usual to the people in your neighborhood?**



















## **REVIEW**

Jay started the session by talking about the relationship we have to fear and how easy it is to fear our neighbors.

**What are some factors that might make someone afraid to engage with their neighbors? What kinds of fears come when meeting new people?**

We have to understand that some of our next-door neighbors are going to be different from us—they might have a different culture, religion, or dress. **In what ways have you allowed someone's differences keep you from getting to know them? How did you conquer that fear?**

Jay summarized a quote from 1 Peter by saying, "Everyone around you is afraid, but not you. Because you know Jesus." **How should our relationship with Jesus impact our desire to reach out to our neighbors?**

Our courage in the midst of the world's fear should draw our neighbors to Jesus. People should desire to know about Jesus after seeing how unafraid we are. **How can an attitude of courageousness give a good impression to our neighbors of what it means to follow Christ?**

When we meet new people, we can be afraid of being judged by others, like how Jay felt about an awkward encounter with a neighbor. But sometimes we don't engage with others because we've already made judgments and assumptions about them. **What did Jay's story show us about the consequences of making assumptions about others?**

Jay didn't let the uncomfortable situation get the best of him. He decided to push through the barrier and talk to his neighbor again. **What was the outcome of the two men reconciling after their awkward conversation? How did Jay's dedication to loving his neighbor turn the situation into a positive one?**

Jay talked about how Jesus didn't allow fear to fuel his actions. When people judged Jesus for hanging out with "sketchy" people, he told them that he did it so they would know the love of God, because that was most important. At the end of the session, Jay asked: When was the last time we were accused of hanging around sketchy people? **How would you answer that question? What are some ways you could imitate the actions of Jesus in your neighborhood?**



## **BIBLE EXPLORATION**

When we choose to follow Jesus and listen to his commands, we're also believing that he will be with us and help us conquer our fears. If Jesus has asked us to love and serve our neighbors, then we have to believe that he will give us what we need to engage with them.

In this session, Jay used 1 Peter 3:14 to help us see how having no fear can actually be beneficial to reaching people for the kingdom.

Read 1 Peter 3:8–12.

**What types of actions does Peter list off that would help improve a relationship with someone else? Which of these actions do you find easier to do naturally and why? Which one is the most difficult and why?**

**What could it look like to display these attributes practically toward our next-door neighbors in our everyday lives?**

We live in a culture that values independence, selfishness, and an attitude that says we should repay evil with evil. **How does this passage speak against our cultural norm? How is loving on our neighbor's counter-cultural?**

Verse 8 says we are to be sympathetic and to love one another. **What could it look like for you to show sympathy to one of your neighbors this week?**

Verse 9 talks about refraining from repaying evil with evil, but to repay it with a blessing. **Describe whether it is typically easy or hard for you to still be kind to a neighbor who was rude to you. What helped you to continue being kind?**

**What kinds of actions could be a blessing to a neighbor who has done evil toward you?**

Some neighbors may not want to hear about Jesus or accept an invitation to church—but they might respond to our compassion, love and interest in their personal lives. **How could our neighbors who are unbelievers be positively affected by this kind of treatment toward them?**

Read 1 Peter 3:13–17.









**BIBLE EXPLORATION**

As we learn about the art of receiving, we must remember that receiving from others allows them to fulfill the command to be good neighbors as well. Giving our neighbors the opportunity to serve and love us is just as important as serving and loving them back.

Dave talked to us about the art of receiving by using the example of Jesus and the woman with the alabaster box.

Read Matthew 26:6–13.

**How does the author describe the perfume the woman poured on Jesus? Why do you think this fact is important?**

The woman came to anoint Jesus with her valuable possession. Instead of denying her gift, he allowed her to serve him. **How were Jesus’s actions a display of “the art of receiving” that Dave talked about?**

It can be hard receiving valuable gift from others, but it can be even harder when we know that the person is having financial issues, struggling to find extra time, or experiencing extreme health issues—we feel like more of a burden by accepting. **How would you feel if someone insisted on giving you a sacrificial gift? How do you think you’d respond in that situation?**

The disciples felt that the perfume should have been given to the poor instead of to Jesus. **Based on Dave’s explanation, why was it important for Jesus to receive the woman’s sacrifice?**

The relationship that was formed with the woman and Jesus could have been damaged if he had he chastised her for her gift. **In what ways could being on the receiving end of a relationship with your neighbor make the relationship stronger?**

**What are some practical steps you can take to reorient your perspective about receiving from others? How can you ensure that you receive from a neighbor the next time they offer their advice, their help, or a gift?**

Lined writing area consisting of 20 horizontal lines for student responses.



