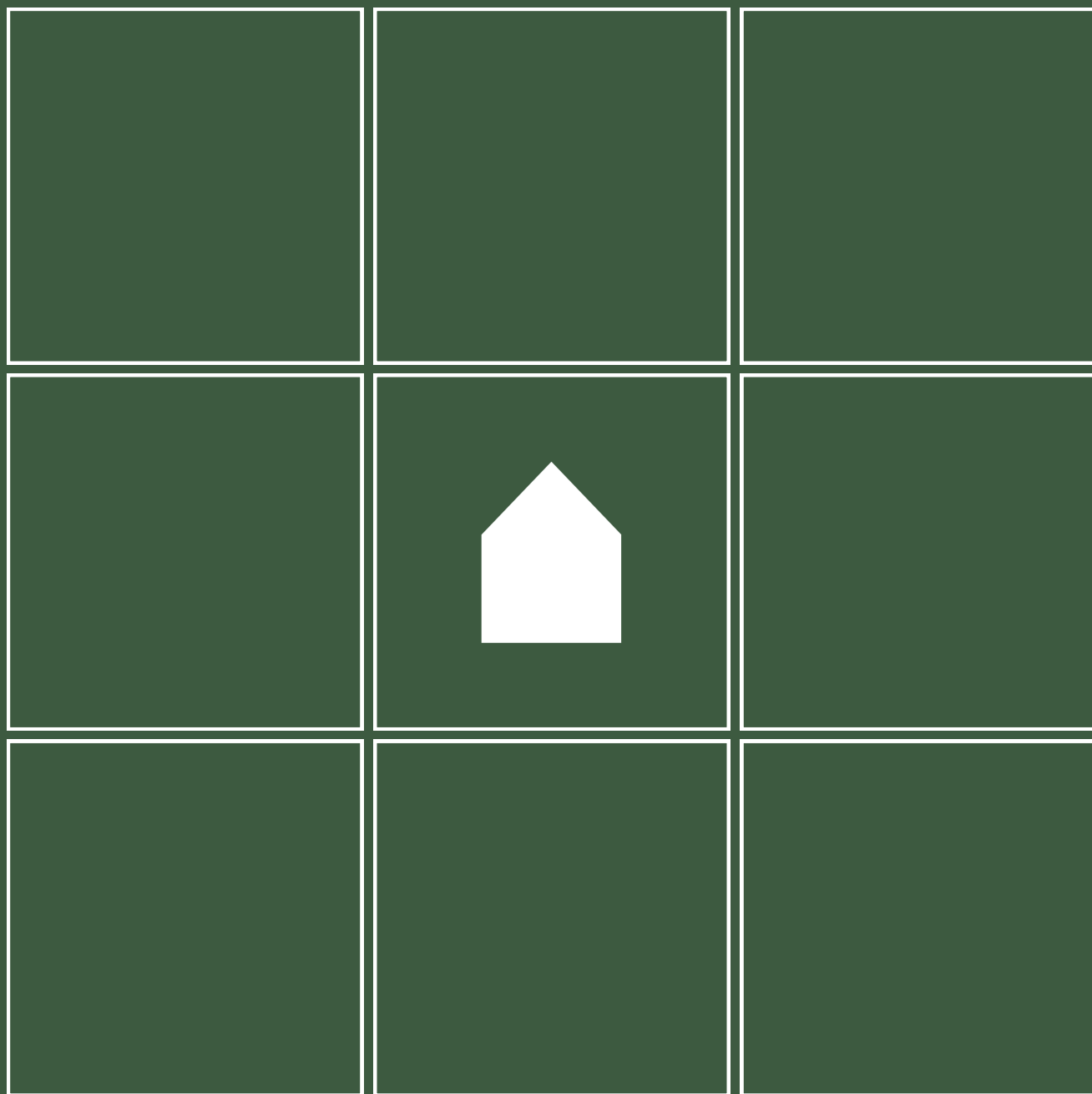


# EVERYDAY EVANGELISM

*Neighboring*



# NEIGHBORING

## *Small Group Study Guide*

### Overview

**“What if every believer knew the names of, loved, and prayed for those who lived closest to them?”**

We love our metaphoric neighbor. We’re less sure about the actual person next door. This teaching starts with Jay, our tired pastor, who didn’t know his neighbors until his wife rolled a grill into the courtyard and the whole apartment complex showed up. It traces that story back to Luke 10, where Jesus tells the Good Samaritan story and then pushes the teacher of the law to answer: so who’s the neighbor? The challenge: before we do graduate-level work, can we start with kindergarten? Can we simply learn the names of the eight people who live closest to us?

### Key Ideas

Four movements from the teaching:

1. We often turn Jesus’s teaching on neighbors into a metaphor and love our “metaphoric neighbor” while not knowing who lives next door.
2. In Luke 10, Jesus stretches the definition of “neighbor” all the way to enemy, but that’s graduate-level work. Most of us haven’t done kindergarten work yet.
3. Knowing someone means three layers: their name, something about them, and what’s going on in their heart.
4. If every believer knew, loved, and prayed for their eight closest neighbors, the radiating impact could change cities and the world.

### Icebreaker

Choose one to open your time together (5–10 min):

1. How well do you know your neighbors right now? Be honest — names, faces, one fact about them. What’s your gut sense?
2. Has a neighbor ever surprised you, shown up for you, or you for them in an unexpected way? What happened?

### Watch the Video

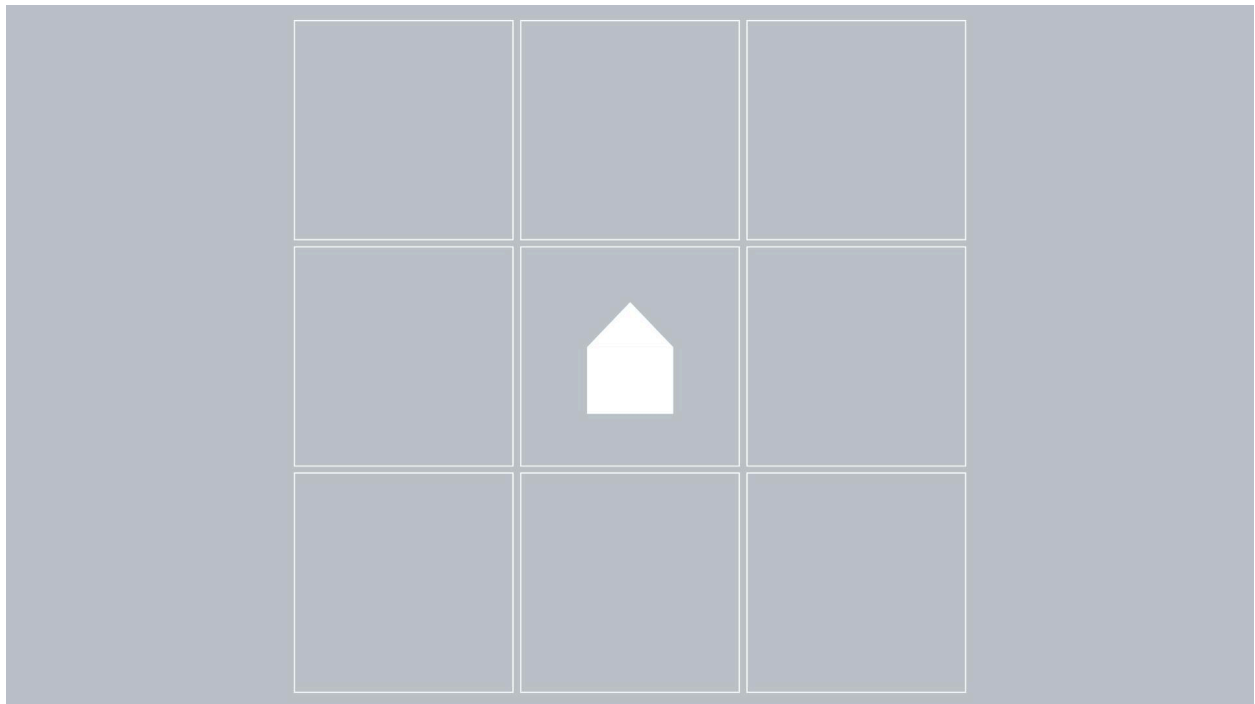
## The Neighbor Chart


Do this together before you discuss. It's the exercise from the teaching:

Draw a tic-tac-toe grid. The center square is your home. The eight surrounding squares represent your eight closest neighbors: across the street, on each side, behind you, catty-corner. In each square, fill in:

- Top: Their name(s)
- Middle: A few things you know about them: job, background, interests, life stage
- Bottom: What's going on in their heart: their hopes, struggles, spiritual condition

Use the grid below, or draw your own on a separate sheet:



After filling it out, sit with it for a moment. What do you notice? Where are the gaps? Jay calls this “the chart of shame,” not to produce guilt, but conviction. It’s an invitation, not an indictment.

## Discussion Questions

### Part 1: The Apartment Courtyard

*Key idea: Proximity isn't the same as community. We can live next to people for years and never really see them.*

1. Jay drove past his neighbors every day to do ministry at church. He had no idea who lived around him at home, nor the kind of neighboring ministry that God desired. Does that resonate? Where have you done the same thing?
2. His wife, Danielle, rolled a grill into the courtyard on a whim, and the whole apartment complex showed up. What does that story say about what people are actually hungry for?
3. What happened in that apartment complex once they started paying attention? What does that tell you about what's possible in your own neighborhood?

## **Part 2: The Lawyer's Question**

*Key idea: "Who is my neighbor?" is often a question designed to shrink the answer.*

1. The teacher of the law asks, "Who is my neighbor?" to find a loophole. Jay says we do the same thing when we turn the category "neighbor" into a metaphor. Where do you see yourself doing that? Loving "the poor" or "your city" in an abstract way while not knowing the person next door?
2. Jesus stretches the definition of neighbor all the way to enemy: a Samaritan helping a Jewish man. What does it say that the hero of the story is the person the audience would least expect?
3. Jay says Jesus may have given us a very practical plan to change the world, and we've spiritualized it into abstraction. Do you agree? What would it mean to take it literally?

## **Part 3: Three Layers of Knowing**

*Key idea: Knowing someone's name is the starting line, not the finish line.*

1. Jay describes three layers: name, facts about them, and desires of their hearts. Which layer are you at with most of your neighbors? Which feels hardest to get to?
2. Jay contrasts "Hey bro, how about those Broncos?" with "Hi Dave, how's your mom doing with her cancer treatment?" What makes the second kind of conversation possible? What has to happen first? Would it be possible to ask a question like, "What's your spiritual background?" or "When's the last time you experienced joy?"
3. When you actually know what's going on in someone's life, how does that change how you pray for them? How does it change how you show up?

## **Part 4: The Radiating Impact**

*Key idea: What if this is actually Jesus's strategy for changing the world?*

1. Jay suggests the Great Commission might be "subsumed" within the Great Commandment, that loving your neighbor is the on-ramp to sharing your faith. How does that land on you? Does it simplify things or complicate them?
2. He says when you know your neighbors and pray for them, "God opens doors you never imagined." Have you seen that happen? What did it look like?

3. If every believer in your city genuinely knew and loved and prayed for their eight closest neighbors, what would change? Paint the picture.

## Scripture

Read one or more of these together and discuss how they connect to the teaching:

- Luke 10:25–37 - The Good Samaritan; Jesus stretches the definition of neighbor to include the enemy
- Matthew 22:36–40 - The Great Commandment; all the law and prophets hang on love of God and neighbor
- Romans 13:9–10 - Love your neighbor as yourself; love is the fulfillment of the law
- Acts 2:44–47 - The early church shared life together and found favor with all the people around them
- 1 Peter 2:12 - Living such good lives among the pagans that they glorify God
- Proverbs 27:10 - Better a nearby neighbor than a distant relative

## Application

Take a few minutes individually before sharing with the group.

### Look back at your neighbor chart

Pick one neighbor — someone whose name you know but little else, or someone you've been meaning to connect with. Identify one concrete next step with that person this week.

Potential next steps:

1. Knock on their door, introduce yourself, and learn their name if you don't know it.
2. If you already know their name, find a reason to check in. Drop something off or simply ask how they're doing.
3. Invite a neighbor over for a meal, a coffee, or just a conversation on the porch.
4. Begin praying for them by name every day this week. Ask God what he's already doing in their life.
5. Host an informal gathering: a potluck, a bonfire, a backyard cookout, and invite whoever lives nearby.

## Ministry Time

As the Vineyard, we proclaim *and* demonstrate. Let the Holy Spirit speak and minister to your group.

Here are a few ministry time prompts given what you are sensing from the Spirit:

1. Ask for the Holy Spirit to speak to the group and identify a neighbor, and to give you the love of God for that person.
2. Ask God to break off any fear that might come up with a step that is so practical. Ask for God's love to fill your group and to replace the fear.
3. As in previous weeks, listen to where the Holy Spirit is releasing certain spiritual gifts. Look in 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 for a list and pray for people in your group to receive spiritual gifts.

## Additional Resource

[The Art of Neighboring](#) by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon

## Closing Prayer

Before you close, go around the group and have each person share one neighbor's name from their chart. Someone they want to begin praying for. Then pray together for those names.

God, forgive us for loving our metaphoric neighbors and ignoring the real ones. You gave us an address on purpose. Help us see the people who live nearest to us the way you see them, as people you love, people with names and stories and needs. Give us courage to knock on doors, to learn names, to show up. Let our neighborhoods feel the difference because we're there.

Amen.

## Leader Notes

Tips for facilitating this discussion well:

- Do the neighbor chart in the room together, not as homework. The discomfort of filling in blank boxes in real time is the point. It creates the conviction that the teaching is designed to produce.
- Expect some defensiveness. People will try to explain their blank boxes ("I live in an apartment", "My neighbors are private"). Gently redirect: pick the eight closest, don't wriggle out of it.
- The application is unusually concrete. Protect time for people to actually name their one next step before they leave. It's easy to walk away inspired but uncommitted.
- Follow up next week. Ask who knocked on a door, learned a name, or had an unexpected conversation. These stories build momentum.
- If your group does this well over time, consider doing a neighborhood meal or block party together. The teaching lends itself to a group action, not just individual steps.