

# The Art of Neighboring

## COVID-19 NEIGHBORING TOOLKIT

All of our lives have been significantly altered in an effort to limit the spread and impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Being diligent to practice social distancing and following the guidelines established by public officials is vital to our own safety and to the safety of others.

However, as we engage in physical distancing practices, it's important to note that **there is a big difference between social distancing and social isolation.** Isolation and loneliness negatively affect our mental and physical health, as well as overall well-being. Most of us have experienced a dramatic change in the amount of face to face interactions we have with people at work, school, and church. At the same time, more people are out walking in our neighborhoods than ever before. As a result, we have a unique opportunity to build connections with the people that live near us that will make a big difference in their lives, and in ours. The key is learning how to do this from six feet away!

Almost a decade ago, a group of pastors in Colorado started a neighboring movement that was centered around this question; **What if Jesus meant that we should love our actual neighbors too?** Their story is documented in the book, "The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door." This toolkit builds on the principles from that book and is designed to provide safe and practical ideas for neighboring during this unique moment that we find ourselves in. "COVID informed neighboring" is the antidote to the isolation and loneliness that social distancing can lead to. Thus, there has never been a better time to meet and connect with the people who live right outside your front door.

*"Right now, we don't need churches to create a bunch of new programs. What we need is for the people who attend those churches to simply be good neighbors and to do it in a careful and thoughtful manner."*

Karen Gieseke, Infectious Disease Epidemiologist, PhD, MS, MTS

# FIRST + NEXT STEPS

1

## REACH OUT TO YOUR NEIGHBORS VIA EMAIL OR PHONE

If you do not have their information, leave a note on their door explaining who you are, where you live, and how they can get in touch with you. Be sure to wash your hands and wipe down the note first.

## WHEN YOU SEE PEOPLE OUTSIDE... MAKE IT A POINT TO TALK TO THEM

One-minute conversations are a big deal when it comes to building relationships in our neighborhood. Use the Block Map visual included in this toolkit to write down and remember the names of your neighbors.

2

## ASK YOUR NEIGHBORS HOW THEY ARE DOING IN THE MIDST OF THIS CRISIS

Asking simple and thoughtful questions is more important now than ever:

- How are you and your family doing in light of all of the changes?
- How has this impacted your job and your company?
- Have you noticed any silver linings as a result of the adjustments that this crisis has forced us all to make?
- Is there anything that you need or that I could help with?
- Have you been able to find flour or toilet paper anywhere?

**Real relationships are two-way streets—don't hesitate to ask for help and to share honestly about how you are feeling and doing.**

3

## BUILD A NEIGHBORHOOD DIRECTORY

Compile contact information of the people that live in closest proximity to you and share it with everyone. Include names, addresses, phone, email, and even the names of children and/or pets if possible.

4

# BEST PRACTICES + IDEAS

## **VIRTUAL MEET UPS**

Host a virtual gathering for your neighbors. Use Zoom, Google Hangout, etc. to connect with the people who live on your street or in your apartment complex.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD SIT INS**

Have everyone bring their own chair and drinks. Be sure to space everyone six to ten feet apart as you enjoy a nice conversation in an outdoor setting.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCE WALKS**

Take a walk with your neighbor(s) while staying 6-10 feet from each other. This may seem awkward at first, but it's a great way to model distancing to others while getting some healthy exercise.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD ONLINE WEBINARS**

Invite your neighbors to do an online webinar around parenting, marriage, or any topic you think would be of interest to you and to them.

## **VIRTUAL TRIVIA NIGHT**

Use a video conferencing service to host a trivia game with your neighbors. There are a lot of great apps and resources that provide fun questions and content.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## CARING FOR OLDER + AT RISK NEIGHBORS

- Reach out to these neighbors specifically over the phone or email. If you don't have their contact information, knock on their door, take a few steps back, and introduce yourself.
- Offer to help them learn technology that might be beneficial in connecting them to their families or others in the neighborhood.
- Ask them if there is an errand that you can run for them or anything that they need. Be sure to go the extra-mile concerning safety precautions. Wash your hands before and after delivering an item and wipe everything down that is delivered to their front door.
- Set a reminder on your phone to check in with them on a regular basis.



## COVID-19 ESSENTIAL GUIDELINES (CDC.GOV)

It is crucial to follow the CDC instructions at all times when interacting with neighbors. Following these guidelines is the best thing we can do to protect ourselves and the most vulnerable among us.

- Wash your hands with soap often and avoid touching your face.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others.
- Avoid having people outside your immediate family into your home.
- Limit touches to hard surfaces that others may have touched and wipe down surfaces when in doubt.
- If you are not feeling healthy, self-quarantine and avoid contact with others.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## SAMPLE NEIGHBOR NOTE

My name is Matt Jones and I live two doors down from you at 5577 Cole Street. I just want you to know that I am willing to help if you need anything. My family and I feel healthy and we will be sure to wash our hands and wipe down anything that you might need us to bring you. It would be great to talk on the phone or text message when you have a chance. My cell phone number is 555-777-5555.

Thanks,  
Matt

## SAMPLE NEIGHBOR EMAIL

Hey Neighbors,

As a result of the coronavirus we are all adjusting to a new way of living. A few of us in the neighborhood have been talking about how we can help one another during this time and I wanted to pass along the following information and ideas.

- If you are older or have health issues and are concerned about going out and running errands, know that there are a handful of your neighbors who are willing to run errands and leave things at your doorstep. The people who are willing to do this will only do so if we are 100% healthy and we will be sure to wash our hands and wipe down anything that is delivered. Please email me if you are interested in something along these lines. There are a number of us who now have a lot of time on our hands and would be honored to help.
- Those of us that have kids in school have become “homeschool families.” This is a new world for most of us, but Danielle and Sharon have been doing this for years. They are up for being a resource and providing tips/ideas to anyone who would like to take advantage of their experience in this area. Here is the contact info for them...know that they are happy to help.
- I have attached an updated contact list for everyone on our street. Feel free to use this info to reach out to each other regularly.

Let me know if you have any other needs or ideas on how to work together during this time. I'm grateful to live on a street where we know each other and can help each other in times like this!

# BLOCK MAP



## WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?



**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE ART OF  
NEIGHBORING CAN BE FOUND AT [ARTOFNEIGHBORING.COM](http://ARTOFNEIGHBORING.COM)**