



# *Neighboring*

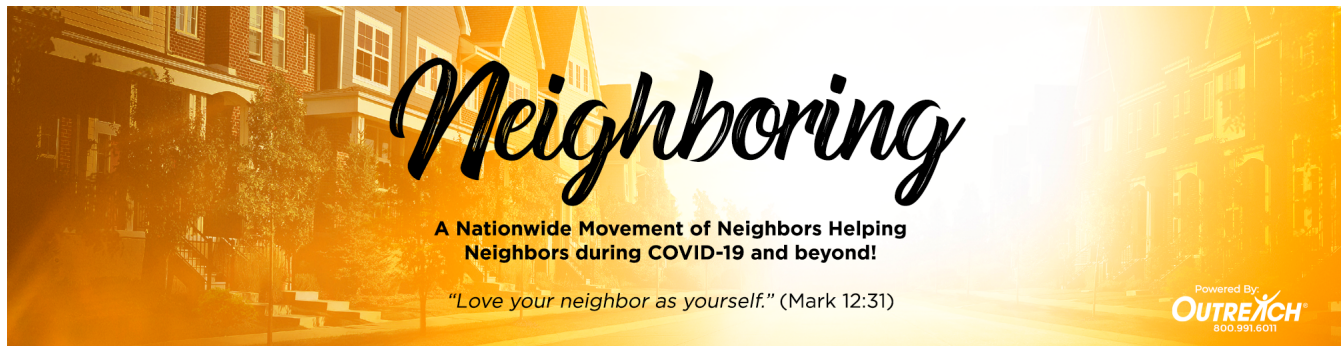
**Taking the Great  
Commandment Literally**

*Neighboring*

**A Nationwide Movement of Neighbors Helping  
Neighbors during COVID-19 and beyond!**

Jason Daye, VP of Ministry Mobilization, Outreach Inc.  
Some material adapted with permission from  
The Art of Neighboring by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon

**OUTREACH**



## ***Neighboring: Taking the Great Commandment Literally***

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### **Welcome**

Welcome to today's message, *Neighboring*... our church is participating with **thousands of other churches across the country during this crisis to demonstrate the love and hope of Jesus in tangible ways.** This is the time for us to *Be the Church* as we actively live out the Great Commandment *to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves.*

Can you imagine what our country would look like if Christ-followers stepped up during this pandemic and were great neighbors? *Let me rephrase it this way... Can you imagine what would happen in our country if Christ-followers truly lived out the Greatest Commandment our Lord Jesus gave us, to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves?*

Our prayer today is that each of us would be inspired to seize the opportunity in these challenging times to become good neighbors as we demonstrate the compassionate care of Christ and plant seeds for sharing the Good News.

### **Big Idea**

***Now is the time to take Jesus' Great Commandment Literally***

Today people are struggling with fear and uncertainty in ways they may never have before. The power and genius of The Great Commandment is that it's so simple and yet extremely powerful when acted on. The most effective thing that we can do collectively to impact our city is to actually live out Jesus' command to love our neighbors. God is at work in the midst of this pandemic and He is inviting us to join Him in practical and tangible ways right in our neighborhood.

### **Sermon Tension Points / Thoughts to Build On:**



Note: In order to contextualize the sermon to your congregation, go through and pick the tension points that best apply to your specific church.

- The coronavirus pandemic provides an incredible opportunity for us to embrace The Great Commandment in a very tangible way, to literally be the hands and feet of Jesus in our neighborhoods
- Many of us have become numb to The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39)
- Good neighbors doing good deeds lead to goodwill, which opens the door for the Good News. How are your neighbors experiencing your good works?
- When we try to love everyone...we often end up loving no one. If we are not intentional we end up having metaphorical love for our metaphorical neighbors and the end result is that we actually do very little.
- Share your personal experience with neighboring. How are you serving your neighbors during this crisis?
- We can only do a few things really well – let's make sure that one of them is the thing that Jesus said matters most.
- When natural disasters and widespread crises strike, your neighbors are your first responders.

## Key Texts

**Acts 17.26-27:** *"From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us."*

- We don't live where we live by accident. And it's not because we like the floor plan, or the school system, or because it's all we can afford. If this text is true, then we live where we live because God has placed us in our specific neighborhoods for a reason. We need to rediscover a "theology of place" and begin to really Love Where We Live!
- "We make our friends; we make our enemies; but God makes our next door neighbor." --G.K. Chesterton

**Matthew 5.14-16:** *"<sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

- Jesus calls us to shine forth the Light by engaging in good works. As we bless and serve our neighbors, they have the opportunity to see Christ in us. Jesus makes it clear that seeing those good deeds can lead to them acknowledging and glorifying God the Father. Good neighbors doing good deeds lead to goodwill, which opens the door for the Good News.
- "God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does." --Martin Luther
- "What often keeps us from loving our neighbors is fear of what will happen if we do. Frankly, what scares me more is thinking about what will happen if we don't." --Bob Goff

### **Luke 10.25-37: The Great Commandment and The Good Samaritan.**

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." 29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

- **Vs. 29:** The expert in the law tries to define his neighbor as someone that he can choose to care for. How many of us have done something similar and thus excused ourselves from the call to know and love our literal neighbors?
- The Samaritan meets the physical, material, financial and emotional needs of the man in his path. Our neighbors are in our path on a daily basis.
- "If we truly love God, we will express it by loving our neighbors, and when we truly love our neighbors, it expresses our love for God." --Richard Stearns
- When teaching the Good Samaritan, it will be important to address the fact that the actual definition of neighbor is much bigger than just our literal neighbors. In raising the value of literal neighboring, we don't want to dismiss the other forms of neighboring. So, you might want to say something along these lines: "I know that many of you might be thinking to yourself, according to this story, my co-workers, the parents on my kids team, the person I served on a short-term missions trip...are all my neighbors. That is actually 100% true. However, that doesn't somehow minimize the fact that our literal neighbors are still our neighbors. Great things happen when we begin building relationships with those who live closest to us and then work out from there. If you have some blanks on your Dozen Door map (see exercise below), then this is the perfect place to start and now is the perfect time to begin."

## **Application: The Dozen Door Challenge**

### **Before the Message:**

1. We encourage you to order the discounted [Neighbors Helping Neighbors tools](#) from Outreach Inc, which were specially designed for use during this crisis. These help your people put all that they are learning into action, including the **Dozen Door Challenge** exercise. You can either order Church packs to share with your people or invite each household to order their own Personal pack to use. During the coronavirus pandemic, the cost of these resources is being subsidized by Outreach Inc to make them affordable for everyone to use as tools for relational evangelism. Find them here: [outreach.com/neighboring](https://outreach.com/neighboring)

2. Review the **Dozen Door Challenge** pdf and go through the exercise yourself. Consider using the tools from Outreach Inc to begin connecting with more of your neighbors. Be ready to share about your experience during the sermon.

3. Make sure to send out the **Dozen Door Challenge** pdf to your people ***before your message.*** Consider posting it on your social media and/or website, as well. Here is some sample text you can include in your email:

“God is at work in the midst of this crisis and He is inviting us to join Him! We are so excited about the sermon this week. In fact, there are churches all across the country that are sharing this same message as, together, we are focusing on the Great Commandment to love God and to love our neighbors. Imagine thousands of churches and hundreds of thousands of Christ-followers being the hands and feet of Jesus in neighborhoods all across our country! In these difficult times, how can you be a caring neighbor?

To prepare for this week’s message please download the attached **Dozen Door Challenge** pdf. Take time with those in your home to reflect on the people who live in the 12 houses or apartments closest to you. How many names do you know from these households? If you have children in your home, be sure to include them in this activity. Write the names of the neighbors you know on the Dozen Door Challenge pdf. Who do you not yet know?

I will share more about the **Dozen Door Challenge** in this week’s message, so be sure to have it handy as you join us online this Sunday at \_\_\_\_AM here: \_\_\_\_\_.

Praying for you and your loved ones and looking forward to seeing how our entire church can make a difference for Jesus during these trying times! It is time for us to truly Be the Church!

Blessings,  
Pastor \_\_\_\_\_”

***During the Message:***

Hold up your **Dozen Door Challenge** pdf and refer to the email you sent earlier. Ask your people if they have their **Dozen Door Challenge** handy. If someone is listening to your online sermon and did not get a **Dozen Door Challenge** pdf, be ready with a link where they can download it.

Have your people reflect on those who live in the 12 houses that are closest to them and have them list out the names of the people in each of those 12 households. Ask for them to comment with the number of households where they knew someone’s name. Assure them that typically, well under 50% of the people will know a majority of their neighbors’ names (have 7 or more of the homes filled in on their **Dozen Door Challenge** pdf).

As pastors, one of the most powerful things that we can do is to share how much of this chart you could fill in when you first did this exercise and how you have taken the next step to connect with your neighbors.

- The point of the exercise is to expose the fact that many of us don’t even know our neighbors’ names. It’s hard to love someone if you don’t know his or her name.
- Challenge your people to look for ways to connect with and compassionately care for their 12 closest neighbors. Tell your people that YOU are going to do this with them. Remind them that their good works will help plant seeds for the Good News.

- Encourage them to use this as a prayer prompt each day to pray for their neighbors. This is a great way to include their children in loving and caring for their neighbors.
- **Optional:** Hold up the neighboring tools from Outreach Inc and tell everyone how their household can get a dozen door hangers from the [Neighbors Helping Neighbors tools](#). If you ordered larger quantities of the door hangers, share how you are distributing them to your people. If you did not order the larger Church packs you can encourage them to order their own Personal Pack of 12 door hangers from <http://www.outreach.com/neighboring>. Share about using the matching yard signs so neighbors can easily identify which home is theirs for ongoing relationship building and ministry.

## Closing Prayer

God, we recognize that we are all facing challenging times. We also know that you are at work in the midst of this crisis. You are the God who redeems... you take that which is meant for evil and redeem it for your good and your glory. Help us to lean into what you've called us to be. Open our eyes and our hearts to those people that are in the closest proximity to me. Let us see them as you see them and awaken us to the things that we have been too busy or too distracted to see. May we be the hands and feet of Jesus to our neighbors, serving them, caring for them and extending to them the love and hope of Jesus during these uncertain times. Amen.

## Sermon Resources

- Read *The Art of Neighboring* by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon Available [here](#).
- We encourage you to order the discounted [Neighbors Helping Neighbors tools](#) from Outreach Inc, which were specially designed for use during this crisis. These help your people put all that they are learning into action, including the **Dozen Door Challenge** exercise. You can either order Church packs to share with your people or invite each household to order their own Personal pack to use. During the coronavirus pandemic, the cost of these resources is being subsidized by Outreach Inc to make them affordable for everyone to use as tools for relational evangelism. Find them here: [outreach.com/neighboring](http://outreach.com/neighboring)



Door Hangers



Yard Signs



Personal Kits

- Review the **Dozen Door Challenge** pdf and go through the exercise yourself. If you are using any of the discounted [Neighbors Helping Neighbors tools](#) from Outreach Inc to begin connecting with more of your neighbors, be sure to order them in advance. Be ready to share about your experience during the sermon.
- Make sure to send out the **Dozen Door Challenge** pdf to your people *before your message*.



# DOZEN DOOR CHALLENGE

Share a door hanger with your 12 closest neighbors.  
As you meet them, fill in their names on this sheet.  
Pray for them daily as you build relationships with them.



Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Needs \_\_\_\_\_



Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Needs \_\_\_\_\_



Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Needs \_\_\_\_\_



Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Needs \_\_\_\_\_

## WHO ARE MY NEIGHBORS?



Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Needs \_\_\_\_\_



Names \_\_\_\_\_

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NEIGHBORS  
*Helping*  
NEIGHBORS