

THE ART OF NEIGHBORING

TALK IT OVER

The Priority of Neighboring

The Art of Neighboring - Week 1

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If you would like to watch the weekend message, visit www.saddleback.com/watch.

Open your group in prayer and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the questions provided or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions toward the end of the document.

Scriptures

Matthew 22:34-40 (ESV); John 15:9 (NIV); Romans 5:5 (ESV); John 7:38 (ESV); John 14:15 (NIV);
Matthew 22:37-40 (ESV); Luke 10:25-37 (ESV); Acts 17:26-27 (NIV); Galatians 5:14 (NIV);
Romans 13:9 (ESV)

Questions

1. Read Matthew 22:36-40 aloud in your group. What are the two greatest commandments? What is the priority of "neighboring"?
2. In Galatians 5:14 (NIV), the Apostle Paul says *"the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"* In Romans 13:9 (ESV), he says, *"The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"* Explain how much of a priority it is to *"love your neighbor as yourself"* according to Paul.
3. In both commandments, *"love God"* and *"love your neighbor,"* we're commanded to love with *"agape"* love. The Greek word *agape* signifies a selfless, unconditional, sacrificial love—often described as *"the love of God."* It contrasts with the three other types of love including *"storge"* (familial love), *"phileo"* (friendship love), and *"eros"* (romantic love). Discuss how a relationship with God is a prerequisite to truly loving our neighbor. How does God's sacrificial love, as shown in the crucifixion of Jesus for our sins, empower us to sacrificially love others?

4. In John 7:38 (ESV), Jesus says, *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"* When we receive the love of God in our hearts, it naturally overflows into the lives of others! In Romans 5:5 (ESV), Paul says, *"God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."* In John 15:9 (NIV), Jesus says, *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you."* In John 20:21 (NIV), Jesus says, *"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."* Discuss how a mindset of neighborly love starts with God's love.
5. The Greek word *"pla-see-on"* for neighbors simply means "people who are nearby." In other words, we're to love family, friends, acquaintances, co-workers, neighbors—everyone nearby! Read aloud Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. How did the Good Samaritan *"prove to be a neighbor"* to the man who fell among robbers? Describe some of the ways God calls us to love our neighbor based on this passage. How else might we love?
6. When and where you live is not an accident! Acts 17:26-27 (NIV) says, *"From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us."* The Lord establishes us so that we can love Him—and the neighbors He places near us! Discuss how loving our neighbors not only helps them—but also helps us to: *"become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ,"* as Ephesians 4:13 (NIV) says.
7. God gives you His Spirit so that you can be His Ambassador here on earth! As you attend to your neighbors' needs, God's love will overflow through you! Discuss what it means to *"love your neighbor as yourself"* in a practical sense. What are some specific ways you can meet and get to know your neighbor? Name one neighbor you can reflect God's agape love to this week.

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message.

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?*

Small Group Action Steps

1. Consider taking the Group Health Assessment in your small group. This assessment will help you see how your small group is balancing the five purposes and will give you suggested next steps for each purpose. Click here to take the Group Health Assessment:
<https://saddleback.com/connect/smallgroups#spiritualCheckup>
2. Did you know that Saddleback produces many new small group studies each year? Visit <https://saddleback.com/studies> to check out Saddleback's ever-growing library of small group curricula.

Are you interested in the Bible and in helping small groups benefit from the weekend message? Well, you are in luck! Saddleback members like you create these discussion guides each week. If you are interested in joining the team, please email Maturity@saddleback.com