



GCI CHURCH HACKS

THE ART OF NEIGHBORING



“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matt 22:38-40)



Jesus invites us to participate with our triune God in drawing humanity close. Loving our neighbor is allowing the love of God to flow into us and then out of us— it cannot remain blocked and still in us. When we allow ourselves to be a channel of God’s love, we experience the love of God more fully and holistically, which then enables us to know God more intimately. In the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, we often don’t have the space to develop relationships with our neighbors. How can we love what/who we do not know? This month’s Church Hack outlines some tips to build relationships with your neighbors.

THE ART OF NEIGHBORING...

- 1. Learn your neighbors' names.** Addressing someone by their name is a powerful form of inclusion and acknowledgment.
- 2. Write a thank-you note to a community leader.** Sending a handwritten note to someone doing good work in your community will go a long way in encouraging them.
- 3. Put together welcome kits for new neighbors.** When you notice someone new in the neighborhood, welcome them with a note, and if you are able, add a homemade treat or a \$5 gift card to a local coffee shop.
- 4. Intentionally support neighborhood restaurants and businesses.** Buying local helps the neighborhood thrive and helps support the local owners and employees of those businesses. Local businesses are also great places to run into neighbors, learn people's names, and develop a sense of belonging. Pick a few restaurants to frequent, getting to know the staff and regulars there.
- 5. Support neighborhood schools.** If your neighborhood school is having a fundraiser or an event, consider participating. If you have time, perhaps volunteer.
- 6. Spread neighborhood positivity and cheer on social media.** Join neighborhood groups on Facebook or Nextdoor and start conversations around the many unique gifts in your neighborhood.
- 7. Participate in holiday décor or activities.** Even the silliest of decorations can add cheer around the different holidays of the year. Decorations are increasingly popular and valued in communities.
- 8. Spend Time in Your Front Yard.** Instead of hanging in your backyard, spend more time in your front yard, which allows you to interact with more people and strike up a conversation with your neighbors as they walk or drive by.
- 9. Build relationships with those taking part in existing programs** that serve the community, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, food pantries, or clothes banks, or daycares.
- 10. Plan "bridge events" designed explicitly to draw people from the neighborhood** by providing for them something they need or enjoy — block parties, free concerts, seasonal events, parenting classes, sports camps, or school supply giveaways, etc.



LIFE RHYTHMS AND ACTIVITIES THAT HELP YOU DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS....

11. Go for a walk or walk your dog regularly around the same time in your neighborhood.
12. Have a garage sale.
13. Have a game night (yard games outside or board games inside).
14. Organize a backyard movie night for kids on your block.
15. Do a prayer walk and talk to people you come across.
16. Jog outside instead of on the treadmill.
17. Join a city softball, soccer, football, or basketball league.
18. Host a sports game watch party.
19. Become a regular at your neighborhood pool/park.
20. Ask longtime residents to help you learn about the neighborhood.
21. Find out your neighbors' birthdays and take them a card and a sweet birthday treat.
22. If you know a family who is struggling with a health issue or has recently had a new baby, take them a meal.
23. Give away things you don't need on Craigslist or to friends on Facebook—not junk.
24. Attend your city council meetings and get to know what's going on in your city.
25. Attend your local school board meetings to know what is going on in the schools.
26. Participate in the local festivals, parades, and celebrations of your city.
27. Get involved in your kids' school PTA or connect with other homeschooled kids through local co-op events.
28. Ask your local college how you can help serve international students.
29. Get involved with your local Lions or Rotary Club to learn about the community.
30. Frequent a live music night at your local coffee shop or bar.
31. Go to the same hair stylist/barber and get to know them.
32. Be a regular at your local farmer's market.
33. Organize a coworking time at your local coffee shop for people who work at home.
34. Start and host a book club in your neighborhood.



