

# HOW TO NEIGHBOR

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## CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- Describe one good memory of an experience you had with a friend or a group of friends when you were growing up.
- Do you enjoy spending time alone? Why or why not?
- What are some realities in our current cultural moment that make it easy to feel lonely?

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## TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

**READ:** John 15:12-17

Amazon saves you a trip to the store. Uber Eats brings the restaurant to you. And social media makes it possible to connect without seeing someone face-to-face. Regardless of whether you think these economic forces are good or bad, what we can't deny is the widespread experience of loneliness. This presents an opportunity for the followers of Jesus to be great neighbors, and Jesus gives us the framework to see how we can love the lonely.

### WHAT IT TAKES TO LOVE

**READ:** John 15:12-13

**DISCUSS:** What practical sacrifices do you think make for good friendships?

Jesus makes a direct link between love and sacrifice. We see the ultimate example of this in his death, but Jesus made smaller sacrifices to love his disciples throughout his ministry. He sacrificed his time to be with them, even when they weren't easy to be around. He sacrificed his status as God the Son, and became a mocked teacher. He sacrificed composure, letting his disciples see his pain and agony before going to the cross. Loving the lonely isn't going to be easy, but it was worth it for Jesus, and it should be worth it for us too.

### HAVING ALL WE NEED

**READ:** John 15:15-16

**DISCUSS:** Why do you think it's good news that Jesus let us in on what the Master is doing?

Knowing that love involves sacrifice can be sobering, because sacrifice rarely feels good. Jesus, however, says that knowing this and living it out means that you've become God's friend. It's the start of doing something great

and meaningful together. He welcomes us into the journey of bearing fruit that makes for greater human flourishing, and although it's costly, God will give us whatever we ask so we can do his will.

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## **GRACE** *SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS*

### **A GREATER LOVE**

**READ:** John 15:17

**DISCUSS:** When we hear the word “command” and the word “love,” we have a hard time understanding how those go together. Based on what Jesus has said so far, why do you think Jesus’s command to love is such good news?

Imagine being part of a community in which everyone only ever loved one another and sacrificed to serve each other. It would be amazing. Jesus gives disciples the commandment to love one another not to earn God’s favor – we already have that because of what Jesus did on the cross. He gives this commandment so that people can live and thrive in a community where love creates a beautiful place to live. Jesus has welcomed us into his family and has healed our loneliness. Now we can extend that same invitation to others.

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## **CHANGE** *APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

- What have you learned from this lesson and how can you apply it to your life?
- Do you feel lonely?
- What does it look like in your life right now to live out the kind of sacrificial love that Jesus is talking about?

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## **PRAYER** *RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER*

- Jesus said that “whatever [we] ask the Father in my name” will be given to us. Pray for ideas, money, and opportunities to sacrificially love the lonely.
- Pray for anyone in the group struggling with the reality of loneliness, that God and others would rally around them.

### **DISCIPLESHIP CHECK-IN**

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?