

Neighborhood Group Vision (part I)

Matthew 22:37-39

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Join us as we share our ten-year vision to saturate our community with Christ-centered Neighborhood Groups [NG] where we learn to love God and neighbors better.

Intro. Vision brochure. Jesus' life, ministry, and teaching are profound and marvelous. They are full of life, and intended to inspire a revolution. Revolutions are always sparked by an idea. An idea that is so clear, compelling, and catalytic that people are inspired to overcome the status quo. His death, resurrection, and Spirit are what give life to the revolution. The essence of the revolution is, ***“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind ... And ... You shall love your neighbor as yourself” [Matt. 22:37-40]*** [the Great Commandment]. Yet, in the business of life we have no time to actually love our neighbors. I have been serving Jesus for over 25 years, and I've been blessed to be part of a healthy, thriving, church community that I love and am exceedingly grateful for. *But I have to confess*, Until recently I neglected to love neighbors, and was therefore rebelling against God without even realizing it. And the Lord revealed the need to repent, and how to change. Today we will discover how together.

Subject: Our Neighborhood Group vision

Object: Love God and neighbors better

I. Our ten-year vision: to saturate our community with Christ-centered Neighborhood Groups [NG] where we learn to love God and neighbors better.

A. What is a Neighborhood Group? Neighborhood Groups are established by connecting people in relationship where they live, work, study, and play. The groups generally meet weekly, and are the primary place where we learn how to be Christ's disciples. Groups will discover God's love and learn to: love God, and their neighbors better (within and beyond the group where they live, work, study, and play).

B. What it will look like when we get there: Our desire is for every person who is part of the Calvary Nexus community to participate in a neighborhood group. At the end of ten years (2026), we see over 200 Christ-centered Neighborhood Groups [NG] saturating every neighborhood of our community. These groups will magnify Jesus and experience God's presence during the week, and as we gather to worship as a large community of faith on the weekends. We will demonstrate the love of God as we befriend and build relationships with our neighbors where we live, work, study, and play. Not as a project or program, but a value Christ commanded.

When we connect with Christ and others, and develop authentic Christian community, we will make disciples who will transform. People will experience: personal restoration, thriving marriages, families strengthened to pass their faith to the next generation. There will be a workplace and school witness for Christ. People will discover and experience their calling to advance God's kingdom. Neighborhoods will be transformed communities for Christ! We believe that God has given us a large enough church community that we can saturate the community around us and beyond with Jesus in the next ten years.

C. What's the difference between a NG and other small groups?

1. Scripture-based study guides help us love God and neighbors together: Each week we make available a study-guide that includes commentary and discussion questions from the portion of Scripture that we studied on Sunday. It allows the group participants to dig deeper into the text and engage in active learning. It helps to align all of our groups, and thus the majority of our church, to a common focus and growth trajectory. In our beta-groups, we have discovered that the study guides are very easy for leaders to use. This helps to give opportunities for additional people to help lead the group. Thus more people are developed to be future group leaders.

a. Encourages the values of loving God and neighbors better: we learn to be mature disciples who love God and others better. The study-guide provides a weekly framework where group participants reinforce the values of loving their neighbors inside and outside the group better. You can use this portion of the study guide with your group even if your group does not adopt a Scripture-based model following the Sunday sermon text.

b. Encourages margin to befriend and build relationships: Most of us feel that we are too busy to develop relationships. Sometimes we are so busy supporting ministry and programs at the church campus that we have no time to get to know neighbors. NGs encourage us to create margin and intentionally invest time to get to know our neighbors – the people where we live, work, study, and play. Building relationships with those who don't yet know Christ will be one of the most effective ways to advance God's kingdom. We want to love neighbors, because it is a value that Christ commanded us to live. These relationships are not a program or a project.

2. Geographic proximity and affinity: Most of our groups are currently based on affinity. This includes common life-stage and/or common interests. We want to also encourage groups to form based on geographic proximity. Geographic proximity can encourage a greater connection with neighbors where you live.

D. Frequently Asked Questions [FAQs]

1. Does our existing group have to adopt the Scripture-based study from the Sunday sermon? No. New groups will start using the study guides. We would ask all to utilize the weekly study-guide portions related to encouraging the values of loving neighbors within and beyond the group better.

2. Do we have to start inviting my neighbors to our group? No. We do hope that as your group intentionally builds relationships with neighbors where you live, work, study, and play that over time you'll discover the blessings of inviting these neighbors to your group.

3. Do we have to share our faith with our neighbors? No. We hope that as you befriend that you share life. Listen to your neighbors, play together, serve them, have a meal, pray for or with them, and over time God will open doors to share your faith.

4. Are we seeking to establish house churches? No. Our Calvary Nexus community of faith will gather on weekends to worship, study the Bible, and experience God's presence together. And we gather during the week in our NGs to learn to love God and neighbors better.

5. How can I start a group? NG Leaders receive pre-launch training and post-launch coaching support. Participate in a NG for at least 3 mos. before starting a NG

a. Next training is 1.29.17

6. How do I join a group? Website, app, welcome card.

7. What's your next step:

Belong: participate in a NG

Become: grow as a disciple and/or as a leader prepared to lead a NG

Befriend: pray for your neighbors, befriend and build relationships with people where you live, work, study, and play.

Conc. We want to encourage every person who is part of our church community to create margin in your life to love God and neighbors better. Start by praying.

Please receive a NG vision **brochure and journal** at the welcome center if you haven't already. And we are providing NG **mugs to all who participate in groups starting 1.8.17**. In the interim, please let us know if there are any Qs or we can help you in any way.

Study Guide Qs

1. What do you think of the vision of loving God and neighbors better through Christ-centered Neighborhood Groups [NG]?

2. How can NGs help people grow in love for God and neighbors?

3. Why might it be difficult for people to actually love God and neighbors?

4. What do you think might be some benefits of a Scripture (sermon) based study guide?

5. What are some of the advantages of actively encouraging the values of loving God and neighbors?