

**Love Your Neighborhood:
EVERYDAY COMMUNITY**

This is the third in a series of messages about what it means to be a Christian and a good neighbor. Already some of you have shared with me your new experiences at reaching out to connect with neighbors. Please, if you can, write down those “testimonies” and send them to me – I love to hear how you are putting into practice what we’re talking about.

Nevertheless, I am concerned that we are living in an age where the art of being good neighbors is a lost art. These days it seems that being a good neighbor simply means that you don’t make trouble for others and you leave your neighbors alone.

Do you think there is any difference between Christians and non-Christians in how they relate as neighbors? In many cases probably not. But that’s not the way Jesus intended it to be. When he was asked what was the most important thing in life – that is the greatest commandment He replied: *“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. 22:37-40.

Jesus clearly linked our devotion to God to our connection with those who live around us. The lament is that many of us come to church, to worship God, but then go home to live among people we largely don’t know. Now I know this not true for everyone here, some of you do know your neighbors and that’s great. But for much of America there is little positive, human relationship building in our neighborhoods. And that’s what we want to address here.

Last week I talked about our constant time crunch and how important it is that we leave margin in our schedules: margin that allows us to be available for God and for our neighbors. You can’t develop relationship with God or anyone else for that matter, if there is no time for it.

Today I want to shift our focus a little to the cultural context we find ourselves in. We’re all aware of the rapid technological changes happening all around us, and some of us are somewhat aware of the cultural shift that seems to be happening. I’d like to share with you some thoughts and reflections that a couple of pastors and authors have written. Tim Chester & Steve Timms have written a book titled, *Everyday Church*,