



LIGHTHOUSE IDEAS FOR CARING

The best way to attract people to Jesus is to be like Him – *showing love and concern*. As you consider your neighbors' needs, ask God to show you ways to reach out to them through warm-hearted, genuine acts of kindness. You can build personal relationships and even get people together for coffee or a barbecue. This offers a great opportunity to reclaim a sense of community within our neighborhoods.

Everyone responds to an act of kindness: a kind word, a meal, or a favor. As you pray for your neighbors, begin expressing acts of kindness to let them know you care about them. Being hospitable and generous with your time will help you develop relationships serving to build bridges to your neighbors. Here are a few suggestions:

- Baby-sit the neighbors children
- Mow the lawn -- surprise them!
- Make them a meal when they don't feel well
- Host a neighborhood Bar-B-Q
- Offer to pet-sit while they're away
- Cultivate common activities like sporting events, picnics; or anything to draw the people in your neighborhood together

Taking the lead with simple things like these will help demonstrate that you care for people. As you demonstrate **caring**, it can lead to opportunities to share God's love, in addition to your own.

More Ideas for Caring

We've put together some simple ideas on how to begin caring for your neighbors. Some of these ideas take a little planning while others are a matter of becoming aware of opportunities to show you care:

- Meet new (just moved in) neighbors with a plate of cookies, a warm welcome and a 3X5 card with your name, address and phone number. Suggest they call you with any questions about the neighborhood such as garbage collection, shopping, post office, etc.
- Put together a neighborhood directory of names, addresses and phone numbers. This helps you pray more specifically for your neighbors and assists everyone in getting to know each other.

- Take dinner to new parents. Use disposable containers so the clean up is quick and easy.
- Plan a neighborhood baby shower for a new baby. Invite several neighbors to assist you.
- Baby-sit for your neighbors. In many cases, families don't have grandparents or relatives in the area who might be able to help. Many young parents rarely have extra time or money to go on a "date." Make sure they – and you – are comfortable with the arrangements and that you know how to contact them should an emergency arise. Can you organize a baby-sitting co-op?
- Call on housebound neighbors. They might enjoy a personal visit or may just want to talk with you on the telephone. If you do visit, take a little something such as a desert, fruit or a book.
- If you have children or grandchildren, consider taking them with you when you visit housebound neighbors. What joy for an older person to just see and watch the children play! Or if the children visit you, let the neighbor know they're welcome to come over and "play."
- Do your neighbors love to read? Consider buying an extra copy of a good Christian novel and sharing it with them. Or, as you finish the books you're reading, start a "lending library" to your neighbors. It's best to do this with the thought that the books might not be returned.
- Take a neighbor who has difficulty driving to his/her favorite store, dry cleaner, or the post office with you, when you're going that way. Then, "splurge" and go to a fast food restaurant for a meal or an ice cream cone as a special treat.
- Take a spaghetti dinner to someone recuperating from surgery. Include a simple garden bouquet and a get-well card.
- Plan a "spur of the moment" or next day coffee/tea or lemonade times and invite two to four neighbors to get better acquainted. One Lighthouse says neighbors often are shy about having people in but do want to get to know one another. She keeps her gatherings very simple so they feel they could do it too.
- Does it get windy in your area? When the wind blows, take the time to pick up trash off neighbors lawns and garbage cans that have blown all over. They'll learn who rescues their garbage cans and recyclable containers. You may get a reputation for being the helpful neighbor!
- When you're baking, consider preparing a few extra cupcakes, cookies, pies, etc. Save them to give to a neighbor the Lord may lay on your heart.
- A friendly wave and "Hi" to someone who drives or walks by helps them see Jesus' warmth and love in you.
- Do you live in a neighborhood with an Association? Consider regularly attending the meeting and being involved in what you can, including pancake breakfasts or potlucks. This gives you an opportunity to meet your neighbors in a very informal setting.

- Learn people's names, as well as the names of their children and pets. Don't be snoop, but try to notice a new car or a new hairstyle, etc. People love to be given an honest compliment, even about the new tree they planted in their front yard.
- Change your walking or exercising schedule if needed, to walk with a neighbor. As you're walking, listen to them. It's probably one of the greatest ways to serve a neighbor or friend.
- Begin a Neighborhood Bible Study. Invite the neighbors who are most interested over for dinner as an introduction.
- Invite two couples in for a simple pizza carry out dinner in your home. Nothing fancy – just a time of getting to know them.
- Are you taking items to the Salvation Army or another donation center? As you get ready to load up your vehicle, ask your neighbors if they have anything they want to donate. That helps the donation center too!
- Host a neighborhood BBQ or block party along with one or two other families in the area. Choose a special holiday time or theme for the party.
- Be the coordinator for a neighborhood gathering in connection with crime prevention and fire safety.
- When a neighbor stops by invite them in. This will usually be when the house is not very clean or when you have company – however, this openness will make you a real friend!
- Mow the lawn or rake the yard of a neighbor who is traveling or is ill. Get your children into the act!

A Lighthouse from California writes, "One thing the Lord has taught us is that it is easy to be busy, too busy, for the most important things in life." She adds, "**We need to always be aware when we are rushing off to that meeting or church thing, to watch. Often this is when a neighbor needs that I-o-o-n-n-g hello and time to share with you. Don't allow our enemy to make anyone think you don't have time for them. People need time and God has a way of stretching our time when we are sensitive to what HE wants us to do.**" Take time, make time, to be the caring person – and Lighthouse – God has called you to be!

Remember, **prayer** opens the doors, **care** let's you walk through them, and **sharing** opens the doors to eternity in the life of another.

Mission America Coalition

P.O. Box 13930, Palm Desert, CA 92255

Phone: 760.200.2707 * Fax: 760.200.8837

www.missionamerica.org * info@missionamerica.org