

## **Reaching Our City: The Neighbourhoods** **Life Group Topic #8- March 1**

**WELCOME:** (15 minutes)

What is the nicest thing a neighbor ever did for you?

**WORSHIP:** (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God-including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

**WORD APPLICATION:** (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following sermon summary before moving to the heart of this section: the discussion around the application questions.

### **Reaching Our City: The Neighbourhoods**

When someone says the word *missions*- what comes to mind? Some far-away place where we send a career missionary or a short-term team?

We have been learning that mission begins right here in our city.

**Recall again the LORD's words to Jonah: "You have been so concerned for this little vine...But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people who cannot tell their right hand from their left...Should I not be concerned about that great city? (Jonah 4:10-11).**

God is deeply concerned for the cities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, just as he was for Nineveh

But so often we as a local church have lived with little concern for the city in which we live. We are content to stay relationally in our Christian subcultures. And a consumerist world means we use the city for what we can gain from it. For these reasons South Abbotsford has designed something called:

### **Reaching Our City (ROC)**

. The idea of monthly Reach Our City weekends is to equip us with two things:

- (1) A concrete understanding of who are the people in our city
- (2) Clear ideas of what can be done to reach them with the compassion and life-changing message of Christ.

We want to pinpoint broad subcultures of our city that are within our grasp to reach.

Each ROC weekend will focus on a different subculture of our city: from neighborhoods, to the poor, to the homeless, to single-moms, to Indo-Canadians, to the student, to the workplace, to the lonely and marginalized.

**Is this a new idea?** NO! We are not assuming that reaching our city is a new idea. Many of us have deeply invested our lives in multiple ways to serve and reach our city. We are discovering champions as we go along and hope to surface more of their stories. Our desire is to awaken in all of us a deeper commitment to what He is already doing among us.

**Is this a new church program?** Reaching our City is **not** about starting some new church programs that will be led by church leaders. Rather, it is to awaken us to the opportunities that already exist all around us to serve others. **As the Spirit of God stirs our hearts, each of us can be the change. In the**

places where we already live, and play, and study and work- we can reach out to others in a thousand simple ways. There is no need to wait.

**Today we want to start by talking about reaching the neighborhoods of our city.** No matter how you define neighborhoods, none of us live in isolation. And in the sovereignty of God, he has placed you where you are. You may not have chosen your neighbors...you may not even like your neighbours! But God in his infinite wisdom has surrounded you with a certain set of people.

**Luke 10:25-37.** Jesus was once asked by a lawyer, "How do I inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God wholeheartedly, and love your neighbour as you do yourself. When the lawyer challenged Jesus with the question: **who is my neighbor?**, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan who helped a man beaten and abandoned at the side of the road. In the story Jesus defines the term neighbor as the man abandoned along the way, who the Samaritan came into personal contact with. The defining moment in determining who his neighbour was comes in verse 29: **"When he saw the man in need, he had pity on him."** (Luke 10:29).

Though our culture hides behind gates, garage doors, and well-insulated homes, townhouses and condos, people in need are first and foremost those who live all around us. Most of them are literally a few steps away from our front door.

### **Word Application Questions:**

**Please keep in mind that these questions are meant as catalysts:**

**1. Discuss this quote:** Des McKay, the former Abbotsford School Superintendent said...*The city of Abbotsford is a community but it has lost its sense of community; we never have been so disconnected. The biggest opportunity may be to put a human heart (back) into community with all parts connecting with it. It all comes down to relationships.*

**2. Read Luke 10:25-37** In your own words, how does the story answer the question, "Who is my neighbour?"

**3. Did you identify with the skit on the weekend that scoffed at the idea of reaching our neighbours? Honestly, are their barriers that make reaching your neighbours a significant challenge? What are they?**

**4. In what ways have you intentionally built relationships among the people on your street, complex or apartment building? Tell the stories!**

**5. Read Colossians 4:2-6. Are you asking God to open up doors for spiritual conversations with your neighbours? Are you praying for the awesome opportunity to lead them to the Life-giver?**

### **SUGGESTED ACTION POINTS:**

- 1. Begin to pray regularly for the neighbours you know by name.**
- 2. Begin pray walks through your neighbourhood or down the halls in your building.**
- 3. Consider the resources offered by Abbotsford Connected Neighbourhoods. Contact Annette Borrows @ 604-864-5770 Ext. 310**