

HOW TO: GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Do you know the people living next door or in the same street as you? In our busy society, it can be easy to overlook the simple opportunities we have to get to know the people God has put right on our doorstep. We've created this guide to give you some ideas on where to start...

WHERE DO I START?

Introduce yourself

The easiest time to get to know neighbours is when you first move in, or when they first move in. Post a note through their door to introduce yourself, or knock on the door with a small gift to say 'hello'.

It's important to avoid overwhelming your neighbour with information, so make your introduction short and sweet. Once you have broken the ice, conversations in the future will be easier.

Share a smile

When you're out and about, it can be easy to be so focused on what you're doing, that you forget the simplest of friendly actions – smiling! If you see a neighbour while you're out, sharing a smile or even saying 'hello' is a good place to start. It will also help you see if or when your neighbour is open to having a chat. For many people this is about as connected as they'd like, and that's completely fine.

Ask for help, and offer it too!

We all need a helping hand from time to time. Asking other people to help us can be a really great way to build connection and trust. It could be as simple as asking your neighbour to receive a parcel when you're out, or feed your pet when you're away.

Similarly, it's good to consider how you can offer help to your neighbours too. This might be a regular task, such as putting out their bins, or something more ad-hoc, like fetching shopping when they're unwell.

It's important to be reliable when offering help, so don't over-commit yourself. Don't feel like you have to help with every request, and always seek ways to make the relationship mutual rather than one-sided.

Get connected

While face-to-face interaction is important to build upon, life can be busy and neighbours can have very different schedules! With that in mind, we recommend not solely relying on this as a means of communication. A simple place to start is to swap numbers with your neighbours, you might even start a street WhatsApp or Facebook group to share messages with several people at once. It's always important to check if one already exists before setting up something new!

If that seems too intimidating right now, why not start by seeing if your wider community has a Facebook group, where you can join the conversation, first. Similarly, we recommend checking out NextDoor which is a social network platform aimed at connecting neighbours. It's free, private and all users are verified before they can join: www.nextdoor.co.uk

Use local amenities

It doesn't take an expert to work out that you're more likely to bump into your neighbours if you visit the same places. With that in mind, we encourage you to make use of your local shops, take walks in your closest park, meet friends in the local café, use the local gym or hairdresser and attend events at the nearby community centre.

We'd love to know any tips or ideas you have for getting to know your neighbours, too!