

Should We Love Our Next Door Neighbour?

How do neighbours and the local community fit into our Kingdom activities? A great deal, to put it straightforwardly.

We have been told by our King that he wants a Kingdom Community on every street so that towns and cities are completely taken for him. He also told us that our focus has to be on our street and not on the city. This means we are to interact primarily with our neighbours and our local community. The reason we have been told this is so we impact these people with the Kingdom, by properly representing the Kingdom and exhibiting its benefits, so that others will want to come in and join us. Everyone has a choice to make whether they want to enter the Kingdom, but they can't do that unless they see the benefits of belonging there. Religion is not an option for them to be introduced to, so Christian evangelism is 'no go' for us, because there's no religion in the Kingdom. The Christian religion is not what Father wanted to set up on the Earth, so we have to do what he wants us to do and live as he wants us to live – this is the Kingdom life.

Do we apply Jesus' teaching on neighbours to our 21st century Kingdom situation?

Actually, **what Jesus taught has nothing to do with next door neighbours and the local community.**

The Greek word the Gospels use for 'neighbour' is πλησίον (plēsíon) which is derived from πέλας (pelas) meaning 'near'. Its use as an adverb means 'close by' and as noun, 'a neighbour'. The 1st century understanding of this is, 'fellow' – i.e. 'a person', 'a countryman' or 'friend'.¹ To the Jews of Jesus' day they understood it this way: 'Any other person' and where two are concerned, 'the other person' (i.e. your fellow man, your neighbour). According to the Jews, it refers any member of the Hebrew nation and Jewish commonwealth.²

So, Jesus wasn't referring to the family who lives next door to you when he taught on neighbours. He was teaching on how we're to interact with the people around us. This Jewish concept of 'neighbour' is not our Australian understanding, but it is exemplified in the American expression, "Howdy, neighbour", when greeting anyone at all.

Jesus told us to love our neighbour. This means we are required, as sons, to love anyone and everyone, not just those we like or those we desire to connect with in our street. Although Jesus was teaching Kingdom concepts pre-New Covenant and speaking to Old Covenant people, loving others is an eternal protocol coming from the Heart of Father. James referred to this as "the Royal Law" and showed that it wasn't a new concept, but that it came from the Torah.³ Interestingly, it wasn't included in the Noahide Laws⁴ which Noah passed on to those who repopulated the Earth after the flood.

Here's a few tips about adapting to loving your neighbour from Jesus' parables.⁵

1. Start by loving the person in your immediate proximity.
2. Let your empathy run a bit wild when necessary. Feel the pain others are in. Put yourself 'in their shoes'.
3. To be neighbourly, you might have to get out of your comfort zone and your normal routine.
4. To be neighbourly may be inconvenient on occasions, and it could cost you actual dollars.
5. Be more creative in the way you communicate so you can adapt to fit into every situation.

1 – Strong (www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/4139.html)

2 – Thayer (www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/4139.html)

3 – James 2:8 (Leviticus 19:18)

4 – See canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/the-noahide-laws.pdf

5 – After Stephen Graves (24-3-2020) "Are You Being a Good neighbour?"
stephengraves.com/articles/read/are-you-being-a-good-neighbour

Chip Ingram once said, “Generosity isn’t an act. It’s a way of life.”⁶ Similarly, **loving your neighbour isn’t an act, it has to become a way of life**. We need to let that way of life shine very brightly.

Don’t get religious and rely on your biblical knowledge when it comes to loving your neighbour. Instead, represent the King and be guided by the heart Jesus of Nazareth displayed as he touched people’s lives.⁷ He’s our prototype, so like him, let the Spirit show you what good works to do and how to do them as you display his love to others.

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6 – quotefancy.com/quote/1707530/Chip-Ingram-Generosity-isn-t-an-act-It-s-a-way-of-life

7 – Read: “What does it mean to love your neighbour”

canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/What-does-it-mean-to-love-your-neighbour.pdf