

There is much conversation about "neighborhoods" and getting out into them. We used a DVD of Zac Harmon-McLaughlin who spoke of his world travels, meeting people and the fellowship of relationship. I began to think of my neighborhoods - I doubt I will be traveling the world to meet in fellowship, and pave new paths. As I thought of my neighborhoods, the places I thought of as a neighborhood began to expand also. The neighborhood where our church is located includes the Anglicans next door. We are amicable and share parking lots when we have larger gatherings. I thought of Phoenix Central and their movie nights in the neighborhood and Saguaro Heights who host a neighborhood yard sale. I thought about our largest gatherings at church and there have been four memorial services where we welcomed not only our members but also visitors.

I thought about the neighborhood where we live. Jay does the dog walking and connects with many as he strolls - we keep up with what's going on within different families, most of whom are of an "age" like we are. It is a nearby neighbor, who is Jewish, who invites us to use her pool for our baptisms. She is widowed and we are glad to help her when she needs it. I thought about my "neighborhood" at the park where we gather early in the morning with friends and dogs. We have relationships of over 15 years, so we know each other well, share the good and the tough - declining of spouses; death of an adult, homeless son; injury of a college age son, a friend who needs blood transfusions every few weeks. After years of friendship, the difficult stuff is also shared.

I thought of a women's group I belong to that is one Chapter of a national organization. Another neighborhood I have belonged to for over 20 years and again, because of the depth of relationships, there is also much sharing of the tough stuff. We are also "of an age." Probably a third of the group is dealing with the decline of husbands; we have dealt with hospice and death among the members. I feel privileged to be among a group of such compassion. Their compassion extends to their churches, communities and neighborhoods.

I thought of our daughter's California neighborhood where we have visited for over 20 years and watched our grandchildren and the neighbor's kids grow up. We know them and have "babysat" our own and the neighbor's kids when needed. They help each other and they are like family to each other. I thought of the church neighborhood of Novato where we attend when we are in California. There are four Gracelanders there from our "era." We step into that church as members and experience the feeling of family and neighborliness.

I recently spent time at the hospital visiting church members and a relative. It seemed like the hospital corridors became like a neighborhood. I met their nurses, saw the white boards in their rooms with the names of the many "helpers" who were in and out of the room providing services and helping in recovery.

My Sundays in worship and fellowship give me the strength to be in many "neighborhoods." To take who I am as a Christian in Community of Christ, who prays the Mission Prayer, learns of the compassion of Jesus, and takes it with me. The world cries out for what we have and somehow it needs to grow wider.

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