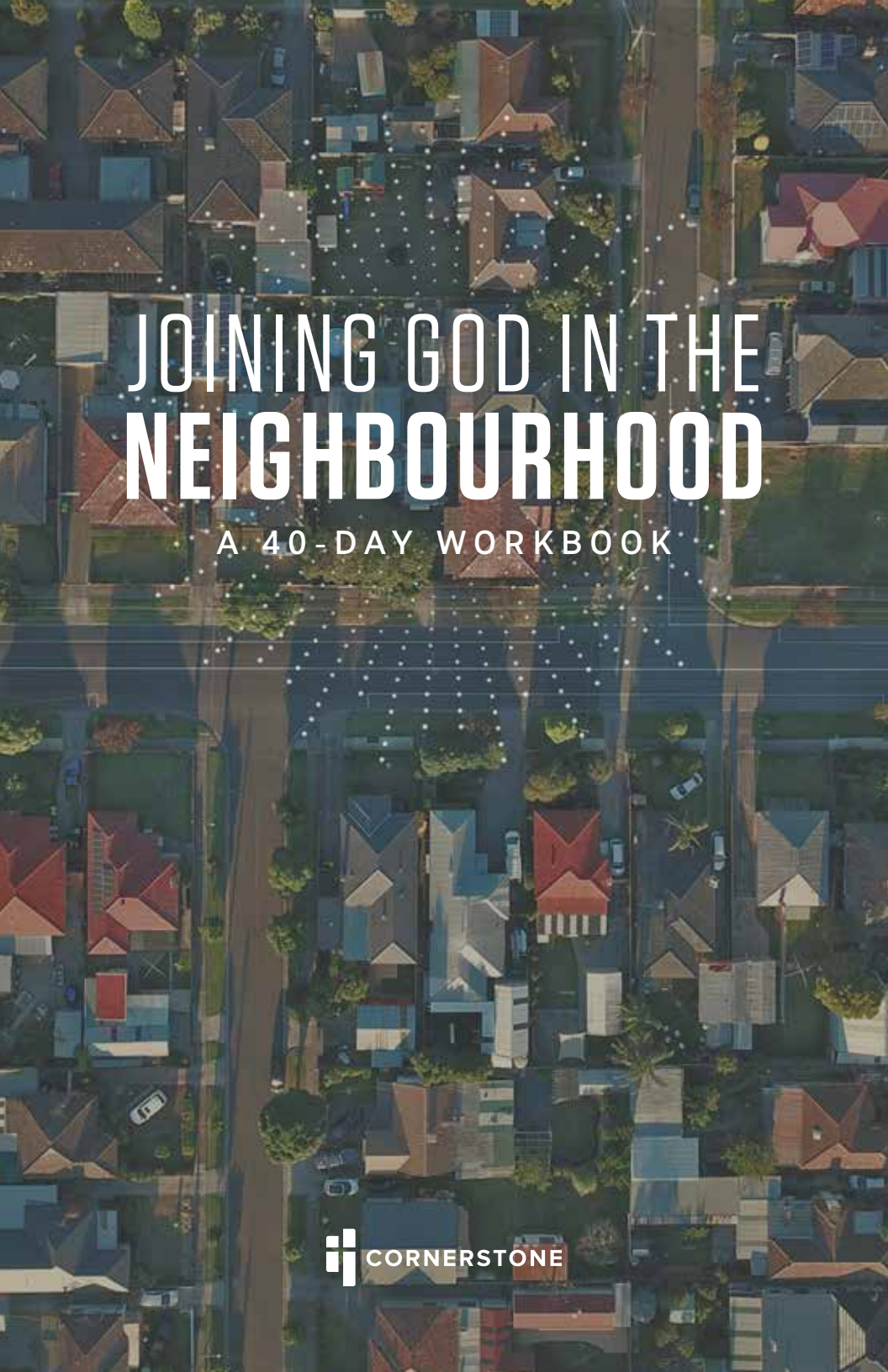


JOINING GOD IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

A 40-DAY WORKBOOK

CORNERSTONE

We are God's chosen people, called to live as "exiles" in this world. Our identity begins with knowing that we belong to God—loved, chosen, and called by him (1 Peter 1:1-2).

Because we know who we are and whose we are, we can look at the places where God has placed us with fresh eyes. He is already at work in the lives and neighbourhoods around us, and He invites us to join him.

JOINING GOD IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

40-Day Workbook

Welcome to 40 Days of Joining God in the Neighbourhood.

We believe that God is already at work in the places where we live, work, study, and play. But we can become so familiar with our routines that we stop noticing what's happening around us. And changing our routines isn't always easy. We like what's familiar, and we're comfortable with what we know.

That's what these 40 days are about: small experiments that help us notice differently. Each week, you'll be invited to read a short devotional and try a simple practice that helps you slow down, pay attention, and notice how God is already present and at work around you.

WHAT IS JOINING GOD IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD?

Joining God in the Neighbourhood is about learning to see the places around us through the eyes of Jesus. We're not bringing God into these places—He's already there. We're learning to recognize His presence and join Him in what He is already doing.

The Bible describes Jesus' coming into the world this way:

> *The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.— John 1:14, MSG*

Jesus didn't stay at a distance. He came close. He shared meals, walked with people, entered homes, listened to stories, welcomed strangers, and brought the presence and love of God into everyday places.

As followers of Jesus, we are invited to do the same. We enter the places where God has already placed us, paying attention to the people and stories around us and asking:

Jesus, where are You already at work, and how are You inviting me to join You?

Through prayer walks, everyday encounters, hospitality, and simple acts of love, we learn to see our neighbourhoods through the eyes of Jesus and participate in what He's already doing.

You don't have to do everything in this workbook. Just take it one day at a time. Try something new, pay attention to what you notice, and see where it leads.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

These 40 days are an invitation to develop a new way of being present in your neighbourhood. Here are 5 simple ways to help you get started and make the most of your 40 days.

1. Choose a Focus Neighbourhood
Choose one place where you will intentionally engage during these 40 days.

Your focus neighbourhood might be:

- **Where you live** — your home, street, and the people who live around you
- **Where you work** — your workplace or the community around it
- **Where you study** — your school, campus, or learning environment
- **Where you play or regularly spend time** — parks, gyms, coffee shops, local businesses, children's activities, hobbies, or community groups

Take a moment to prayerfully consider where Jesus may be inviting you to pay attention.

My focus neighbourhood is: _____

2. Sign Up
Visit **cornerstonechurch.ca/joiningGod** to sign up and find additional resources to help you along the way. As part of the sign-up, you'll have an opportunity to tell us your focus neighbourhood. This will help us learn where God has placed people throughout our communities.

3. Do It with Others
You don't have to do this alone. In fact, this can be a great way to learn together as a family. Invite your children to join you on a walk through the neighbourhood, help them notice the people and places around them, or try one of the weekly practices together. Ask questions like,

"What did you notice?" "Who do you think Jesus might be inviting us to notice?" or *"How could we pray for this person or place?"* You might also invite a friend or someone from your small group to join you. As we share what we're seeing and learning, we often discover things we would have missed on our own.

4. Write Down What You Notice
Throughout these 40 days, take time to record your observations, questions, prayers, and experiences. Use the reflection pages in this workbook or keep a separate journal.

5. Try These Simple Practices
This isn't a checklist but consider these practices that can help you become more attentive to the people and places around you.

- **Go for prayer walks** — pray for the people, homes, schools, parks, businesses, and community spaces around you.
- **Become a regular** — spend time in the same local places and become a familiar presence.
- **Participate in community life** — attend local events, activities, programs, or gatherings.
- **Pursue your hobbies with others** — find ways your everyday interests can become opportunities for connection.
- **Support local businesses** — learn people's names, listen to their stories, and offer kindness and encouragement.
- **Serve your neighbours** — look for simple ways to help, encourage, or meet a need.
- **Practice hospitality** — make space for relationship through a coffee, meal, conversation, or simply listening.

WEEK 1 LEARNING TO NOTICE PEOPLE

Introduction
We can live in a neighbourhood for years without really seeing the people around us. We know the streets. We recognize the houses. We may even see the same people regularly. But how often do we actually stop and pay attention to them?

This week, we're going to slow down and begin noticing the people God has already placed around us.

A Devotional for the Week: Read Matthew 9:35–38 (NLT)

> *"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."— Matthew 9:36, NLT*

Jesus moved through towns and villages, teaching, healing, and announcing the good news of God's kingdom. But what stands out is how Jesus saw the people around Him.

He didn't simply see a crowd. He saw people. And when He saw them, He was moved with compassion.

We can easily move through our neighbourhoods without really seeing people. We see someone walking their dog, a neighbour getting into their car, or someone sitting alone at a café—but we may never stop to wonder about their story.

Part of Joining God in the Neighbourhood is learning to see again. This week, don't worry about what you should do. Start by noticing people.

Prayer
Jesus, slow me down and give me Your eyes. Help me see the people around me—not as strangers, interruptions, or categories, but as people You love. Show me who You are inviting me to notice this week. Amen.

This Week's Practice
Spend some intentional time in your neighbourhood simply noticing people.

Take a walk. Sit somewhere. Visit a place where people naturally gather. You don't need to start conversations or do anything significant. Your first step is simply to become more aware of the people around you.

SEE
- Who do I notice?
- Who might I normally overlook?
- What surprises me?

PRAY
- Ask Jesus to help you see people the way He sees them.
- Pray for the people you encounter, even if you don't know their names.
- Ask, "Jesus, who are You inviting me to notice?"

DISCERN
- What might Jesus be showing me?
- Where do I notice connection, loneliness, joy, or need?
- Is there anyone or anything I feel invited to pay more attention to?

RESPOND
Look for a natural opportunity to take a small step toward someone:
- Smile or say hello.
- Introduce yourself.
- Have a conversation.
- Offer encouragement or a simple act of kindness.

Don't force it. Simply respond to what you notice.

WEEK 2 PAYING ATTENTION TO EVERYDAY PLACES

Introduction
God is not only present in churches, worship services, or explicitly "spiritual" places. He is already at work in the ordinary places where people live.

This week, we're going to pay attention to the places we naturally spend time and learn to see them differently.

A Devotional for the Week: Read Acts 17:22–28 (NLT)

> *"He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples."— Acts 17:24, NLT*

Paul found himself in Athens, surrounded by people, ideas, religious practices, and places that were unfamiliar to him.

Rather than staying separate from the people around him, Paul paid attention. He noticed what mattered to them and found a way to connect with their story. Then he reminded them that God is not far away. God is already present in the places where people live their everyday lives.

Jesus did the same. He entered dusty roads, crowded tables, homes, workplaces, and ordinary neighbourhoods. He was present in everyday life.

This week, choose a place you naturally visit and slow down enough to notice it. Maybe it's a coffee shop, grocery store, park, restaurant, gym, school, workplace, or community centre. Notice the people. Notice the atmosphere. Notice what brings people together.

Prayer
Jesus, help me become present to the ordinary places around me. Open my eyes to see the people, stories, and needs that I usually rush past. Remind me that You are already there. Amen.

This Week's Practice
Choose one ordinary place in your neighbourhood and spend some intentional time there. Rather than rushing through, slow down and pay attention to what is happening around you.

SEE
- What do I notice about this place?
- Who spends time here, and what brings them here?
- What surprises me?

PRAY
- Ask Jesus, "What do You want me to notice here?"
- Pray quietly for the people and places around you.

DISCERN
- What did I see differently because I slowed down?
- What might this place tell me about the people who live here?
- Where might God already be at work?

RESPOND
Consider one simple way to become more present in this place:
- Become a regular.
- Thank someone who serves your community.
- Linger instead of rushing away.
- Intentionally support a local business.

WEEK 3 MAPPING YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Introduction
Sometimes we need to step back before we can really see what is happening around us. Our neighbourhoods are more than the streets where we live. They include the places where people gather, work, learn, play, worship, shop, receive help, and build community.

This week, we're going to step back and look at our neighbourhood as a whole.

A Devotional for the Week: Read Luke 10:1–9 (NLT)

> *"The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them on ahead in pairs to all the towns and villages he planned to visit later." — Luke 10:1, NLT*

Jesus sends His followers into towns and villages ahead of Him. He tells them to enter the places where people already live, stay there, eat what is offered, and receive the welcome they are given.

They aren't being sent with a fully developed plan for transforming each community. They're being sent into the neighbourhood.

That gives us a helpful posture as we map our own communities. When we look around, we don't have to begin by asking, "What should we do here?" Instead, we can ask: "What is already here?"

Our role is to become learners—to enter with humility, pay attention, and ask Jesus to help us see what He sees.

Prayer
Jesus, help me see my neighbourhood through Your eyes. Show me the people, resources, needs, and signs of life that are already here. Give me humility to listen and discern before I act. Amen.

This Week's Practice
Create a simple map of your neighbourhood or community. It doesn't need to be artistic or detailed. Use a printed map, Google Maps, or simply draw one yourself.

Look at your neighbourhood as a whole and identify some of the places and people that make up the community.

SEE
Look for:
- Where people live, gather, work, learn, play, and connect
- Places that provide community, care, or support
- Signs of life, need, loneliness, or hope

PRAY
As you look over your map:
- Pray: "Jesus, where are You already at work?"
- Pray for the people, places, organizations, and communities you've identified.

DISCERN
- Where does community seem strong?
- Where might people be disconnected or in need?
- Who is already working for the good of this community?

RESPOND
Choose one place, person, or community resource you'd like to learn more about.

You might:
- Visit a neighbourhood space you've never been.
- Attend a local event or community gathering.
- Learn about a local organization.
- Spend more time where people gather.

WEEK 4 LEARNING ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Introduction
If we want to love a place, we need to know its story. Every neighbourhood has a story—what people celebrate, what they struggle with, what they hope for, and what they fear.
This week, we're going to move beyond simply noticing our neighbourhood and begin learning about it.

A Devotional for the Week: Read Jeremiah 29:4–14 (NLT)

> *"And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare." — Jeremiah 29:7, NLT*

God's people were living in Babylon, a place they had not chosen for themselves. Yet God told them to settle in, build homes, raise families, and seek the good of the city where they lived. They were not simply waiting for the day they could leave. God invited them to love and seek the flourishing of the place where they were.

We are invited to do the same. Learning to love our neighbourhood means learning its story.

Who has lived here for generations? Who is new? What cultures and languages are represented? What do people celebrate? What challenges do they face? Whose voices are heard—and whose might be overlooked?

The more we know our neighbourhood, the more we can learn to love it—and the people God has placed there.

Prayer
Jesus, teach me to love the place where You have placed me. Help me listen to its stories, celebrate what is good, care about what is broken, and seek the flourishing of the people who live here. Amen.

This Week's Practice
Choose one way to learn more about your neighbourhood or community. Read local news. Visit a community organization. Learn about the history of the area. Talk to someone and ask what they love about the neighbourhood and what they would change.

SEE

- What do I learn about this community?
- What do people seem to celebrate, value, or struggle with?
- What surprises me?

PRAY
Ask Jesus: "Help me love this place the way You do."
Pray for the people and organizations you learn about.

DISCERN

- What is beautiful about this community?
- What seems broken or difficult?
- Where do I see people already working for the good of others?

RESPOND
Choose one way to become a little more connected to the life of your community:

- Support something good that is already happening.
- Attend a local event or gathering.
- Encourage someone who is serving the community.
- Keep learning and listening.

WEEK 5 CONVERSATIONS AND HOSPITALITY

Introduction
Joining God in the neighbourhood is ultimately about people. Relationships usually begin in simple ways: a conversation, a shared meal or coffee, a walk.

This week, we're going to practice making space for relationship.

A Devotional for the Week: Read Luke 19:1–10 (NLT)

> *"When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. 'Zacchaeus!' he said. 'Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.'" — Luke 19:5, NLT*

Zacchaeus was not the kind of person most people would have chosen to spend time with. Yet Jesus noticed him. Jesus called him by name, invited Himself into his home, and made space for a relationship that changed Zacchaeus's life.

Jesus didn't begin with a program or a carefully planned ministry strategy. He began with presence. He entered Zacchaeus's world and made room for conversation, relationship, and transformation.

Hospitality is about making that kind of space. It doesn't require an elaborate dinner or a perfectly clean home. It might be offering coffee, sharing dessert, or simply having a conversation.

We don't need to manufacture relationships or force spiritual conversations. We simply make ourselves available.

Prayer
Jesus, thank You for the way You have welcomed me. Teach me to become someone who makes space for others. Give me courage to take small steps toward relationship this week, listening well and being present. Amen.

This Week's Practice
Look for a natural opportunity to have a conversation or practice hospitality. Don't force it. Simply be available to the people around you.

SEE
- Who seems open to conversation?
- Who do I regularly encounter but rarely talk to?
- Where do conversations naturally happen?

PRAY
Before or during a conversation, quietly ask: "Jesus, help me listen well and love this person well."

DISCERN
- What did I learn about this person?
- What did I notice about myself?
- Is Jesus inviting me to continue the relationship?

RESPOND
Take one small step toward relationship:
- Introduce yourself.
- Invite someone for coffee or dessert.
- Share a simple meal.
- Ask a question and really listen.

WEEK 6 LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING AHEAD

Introduction
Forty days can feel like a long time. Before we move on, take some time to look back.

The goal of these 40 days wasn't to complete a list of activities. It was to begin developing a new way of being present in our neighbourhood—to slow down, pay attention, pray, and listen.

Now we get to ask: *What have I noticed, and where is Jesus inviting me to go from here?*

A Devotional for the Week: Read John 20:19–23 (NLT)

> *"Again he said, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." — John 20:21, NLT*

The disciples were gathered behind locked doors when Jesus appeared among them. His first words were words of peace. Then Jesus sent them.

In many ways, that's what these 40 days have been about.

Maybe you've noticed things you would normally have missed. Maybe you've met someone new. Maybe you've discovered a place in your community you had never really noticed.

You've begun to see your neighbourhood differently. And the invitation doesn't end with these 40 days.

As you look back, ask: *"Jesus, what are You inviting me to continue doing?"*

Prayer
Jesus, thank You for opening my eyes to the places and people around me. Thank You for the ways You have been at work, even when I didn't notice. Help me continue to walk through my neighbourhood with Your eyes, Your compassion, and Your presence. Show me where You are already at work and give me the courage to join You. Amen.

This Week's Practice
Look back over the past five weeks. Review your notes, maps, reflections, prayers, and experiences. Then consider what God may be inviting you to continue.

SEE
- What have I noticed?
- Who and what has become more visible to me?
- What stands out as I look back?

PRAY
Thank Jesus for what you have seen and experienced.
Ask: "Jesus, what are You inviting me to continue?"

DISCERN
- Where have I seen God already at work?
- What relationships or places might Jesus be inviting me to continue engaging?
- What practices have helped me become more present?

RESPOND
Choose one or two things you want to continue beyond these 40 days:
- Keep praying for your neighbourhood.
- Keep showing up somewhere and becoming a regular.
- Stay connected with someone you've met.
- Continue practicing hospitality.
- Participate in community life.
- Look for opportunities to serve, encourage, or meet a need.

The 40 days may be ending, but the invitation continues:
Jesus, where are You already at work, and how are You inviting me to join You?

REFLECTIONS/NOTES

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