

# Life on the Porch

## Building Genuine Connections



### **Patronize the businesses in your church's neighborhood.**

Get to know the owners and/or managers. Ask how the church can support them, their employees, and their business.



### **Walk the neighborhood — repeatedly.**

Pray as you walk. Pray for the neighbors, the community, the well-being of your neighbors, and that God would open the eyes of the church for how to connect with the neighbors in meaningful ways to provide a positive impact for the community as a whole and the individuals who make up the community.



**Be more present in the community.** Be in the places where the community is already gathering (i.e., city meetings, neighborhood watch groups, homeowners' associations, school board meetings, parent teacher associations, etc.). Listen to what your neighbors are involved in, what they care about, what concerns they have, and what gaps exist. Where does the church have gifts and passion that could address one of those gaps or concerns that no one else can address? How might your congregation be called to eliminate this identified gap?



### **Conduct a community focus group to learn more about your neighborhood.**



**Have repeated conversations with those same neighbors to begin to form relationships and build trust.**

### **Invest in one-on-one conversations with neighbors.**

Approach the conversations with curiosity, a genuine interest in the person, and a desire to know them, hear their story, and understand them. The purpose is not to persuade them to come to church! The purpose is to know and understand your neighbors stories so you can better connect and serve with your neighbors. Strive to listen (not talk) through 80 percent of the conversation.



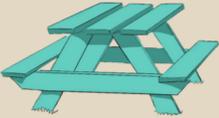
### **Work with community partners to better your community.**

For example, team up with another organization and conduct a makeover on the city playground. Invite the neighborhood to participate. Hold a neighborhood celebration when the project is completed.



### **Consider starting a Turquoise Table movement in your neighborhood.**

Have multiple open tables at homes of church members to begin connecting and building relationships with neighbors. See [theturquoisetable.com](http://theturquoisetable.com)



### **Walk your neighborhood and bless people.**

For example, hand out bottled water or seedlings to people working in their lawns or sitting on their front porch. Gift a bottle of bubbles to children out playing in their yards or in the park (with parental permission). Perhaps wear your church T-shirt declaring the church has left the building, but again it's not about inviting people to church. It is the simple gesture of being neighborly and blessing people.



### **Deliver donuts or other special goodies to local school personnel and businesses.**

Thank them for serving and investing in the community.

