



The Neighboring Church: Getting Better at What Jesus Says Matters Most

Brian Mavis, Rick Rusaw

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The simple practice of loving our neighbors has more power than the best professionally produced Sunday "show" in town.

After attending the "coolest" and fastest-growing church in town for a few months, Brian Mavis asked some of his neighbors if they would attend church with him. The neighbors said, "Thanks, but no thanks. We don't want to be part of an institutional church ... but we do want to know more about God, and we'd be happy to meet with you to learn more." So Brian began meeting with his neighbors in his home to share the love of God.

And there it is—the call for us as Christians to do what Jesus said matters most:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart ... and love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37–40).

But loving your neighbors is hard work, right? It's messy. It's unpredictable. It's time consuming. Jesus' two commands give rise to more angst, more wrestling, more failure, and more challenge than anything else you can try to do. And yet, following those two directions will bring more clarity, joy, and satisfaction to your life than anything you have ever experienced before. For the very first time, you will probably feel you are doing what God really called you to do as a Christian and as a church or ministry leader.

In *The Neighboring Church* authors Brian Mavis and Rick Rusaw explore the *hows* of loving your neighbors. After all, loving the Lord with all your heart and following his lead automatically means loving your neighbors, because he loves them so much. Brian says,

Neighboring is about teaching, encouraging, equipping, and releasing Christians to love their neighbors. I am compelled to be part of this movement because it is life-giving. It's the most creative way I know to follow Jesus. Besides, it's what he taught us to do.

And there it is again—the secret to doing what Jesus says matters most—the secret revealed in the book you hold.

It's always great to hear from practitioners and not just theoreticians. This book is flows from the life of a local church that is leaning into the neighborhoods that are represented in their congregation. Brian and Rick speak from experience and give a number of practical tools that will help anyone that is trying to learn how to love their neighbors and leading others to do the same. They show a way forward for believers to take the Great Commandment seriously and literally.

- Jay Pathak, co-author, *The Art of Neighboring*

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