

JUNE 18 & 19

KNOCKING DOWN BARRIERS

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INTRODUCTION

In *A Man Called Norman*, preacher Mike Adkins tells the story of his eccentric neighbor whom everyone is afraid of. Norman is the small town outcast who is elderly, lives alone and talks mostly to himself. Mike's life and heart are forever changed when he puts aside his busy schedule to include this eccentric neighbor in his life. At first, Norman responds cautiously to Mike's persistent friendship before eventually committing his life to Christ. Norman teaches us we all are in a rush in this world and oftentimes don't take time for individuals who are slower, maybe not as clean, and with whom we have nothing in common. It requires work to get to know them. In this week's message, we learn God can use us if we'll slow down and reach over the fence or across street to express His love.

DISCUSSION

1. **Read Luke 10:25-37.** What excuses might the priest and the Levite give if asked why they didn't stop? Why is a Samaritan the least likely person Jesus could have chosen as a "neighbor"? Look around your neighborhood. Who's the least likely for you to consider you as your neighbor? Why?
2. **Read Luke 10:38-42.** What are Martha's and Mary's gifts, and how does each use them in ministering to their honored guest? Who do you relate to the most? How can we take our gifts and effectively share Christ with others?
3. **Read 1 Peter 3:15.** In what ways can we prepare to share Christ's gospel with those around us? Share as a group some fears you have about sharing your faith, and take time to pray for the strength to overcome these fears. Discuss what someone would see in our group or our lives to motivate them to ask about our faith.

THINK ABOUT IT

Marion Stroud tells the following story to illustrate how we might reach out to a neighbor. "Mary" enjoyed her midweek church group meeting when she and several friends gathered to pray, worship and discuss questions from the previous week's sermon. One week, as Mary picked up her car keys to head to Bible study, the doorbell rang. "I'm so sorry to bother you," said her neighbor Sue, "but are you free this morning?" Mary was about to say she was going out when Sue continued, "I have to take my car to the repair shop. Normally I would walk or cycle home, but I've hurt my back and can't do either at the moment." Mary hesitated for a heartbeat and then smiled. "Of course," she said. As she drove Sue home, Mary learned about Sue's husband's battle with dementia and the utter exhaustion being a caregiver can bring. She listened, sympathized and promised to pray. Mary didn't get to church that morning to talk about sharing her faith. Instead she took a little bit of Jesus' love to her neighbor who was in a difficult situation.

DO SOMETHING

1. Take a walk on your block or through your apartment complex, and whisper a prayer for each neighbor as you pass by their doorway. Ask God to put one of these neighbors on your heart and show you how you can begin building a relationship with them. Then, make a plan to act on God's prompting, and begin the adventure of reaching someone for Christ.
2. What are you good at? Is there a hobby or skill you can share with a neighbor or co-worker? If you are a master gardener, show someone how to tend their flowers or vegetables. Perhaps you are an avid cyclist; if so, why not invite someone to ride with your group this weekend? You might enjoy hunting, fishing, kayaking, tennis, jogging, restoring furniture or something else; each of these are opportunities to include someone in your life. Prayerfully consider how you might use your special gift to communicate Christ's message in a non-intimidating manner.

For more information, email grouplife@prairielakeschurch.org