



LIFEHOUSES

love your neighbor as yourself

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LIFEHOUSES

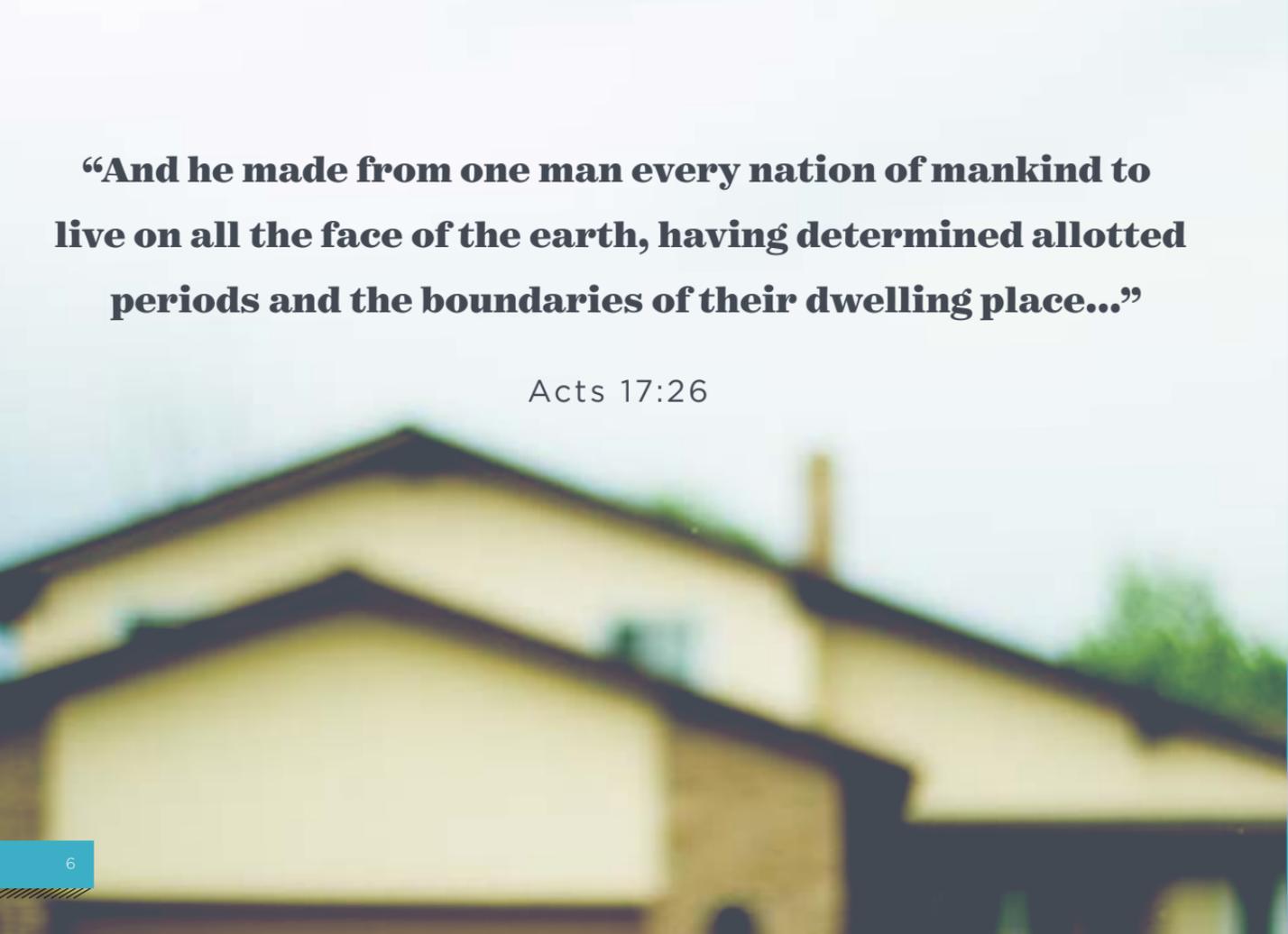
The Vision

**New life
in Christ
displayed
through love
and service
to our
immediate
neighbors**

Life Houses are homes where CVC occupants see themselves placed strategically by God to love, serve, and interact with their immediate neighbors the ultimate desire being that they would come to experience new life in Christ. Living new in their presence is one of the most profound ways we can invite them to new life in Christ.

Because your neighbors may be broken, fragmented, disconnected, isolated, or lost, they need to see the new life of Christ evidenced in your life. You are not in your neighborhood by

accident (Acts 17:26). You live where you do for a particular purpose. Your talents, hobbies, and life experiences have been strategically placed by God to impact and influence your neighbors and neighborhood. If you have new life in Christ, your presence helps bring new life in Christ to your neighborhood. This is what makes you a "Life House." Imagine ways in which your neighborhood can become a local community where love and care happen regularly!



“And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place...”

Acts 17:26

We can't love our neighbors if we don't truly know them. Many of us have lived next to someone for years and still don't even know their name. A Life House purposefully engages with the eight neighbors most immediately surrounding them. Every neighborhood has needs and every CVCer is living in some kind of neighborhood context.

Jesus said, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” What if we did more than just wave as we drive in and drive out, as we work in the yard, as we get the mail? What if we did more than sometimes ask, “How are you?”

To truly love our neighbors, we must be willing to serve them by looking out for their own good as we would want to be looked out for.

The primary focus of being a Life House is to build genuine relationships with our immediate neighbors through love and service,

believing and hoping that it will lead to a visible and verbal witnessing opportunity to share Christ.

Life Houses is a lifestyle designed to fulfill Jesus' desire for us to invite people to new life in Christ in our own local neighborhoods. We do this by following Jesus out of our church building and going with Him as missionaries into our neighborhoods, asking:

How can we create a sense of community here?

How can we bring new life in Christ here?

What are ways I can love and serve the immediate neighbors God has placed around me?

**How would we answer the question,
“If CVC vanished, what would be
missing in our community?”**

This lifestyle resonates with me as one of the largest impacts we can have as a church in our local context. I encourage you to listen to the message series titled Life Houses by going to www.cvconline.org/series/.

Using the Acts 1:8 concept — this strategy of reaching our “Jerusalem” — please join with my family in making our homes Life Houses within our own neighborhoods as we seek to invite our neighbors to new life in Christ.

CHAD ALLEN | LEAD PASTOR
Cuyahoga Valley Church

“

**This is not a project or an event.
This is a lifestyle we are calling our
people to; an identity for their home.**

— Pastor Chad Allen

You Can Bless Your Neighbors When You Pray For Their:

BODY (PHYSICAL HEALTH NEEDS)

LABOR

EMOTIONAL NEEDS

SOCIAL LIFE

SPIRITUAL LIFE

LIFEHOUSES

PRAYER | CARE | SHARE

1

Take at least 5 minutes a day to pray for specific neighbors by name and by need. With 8 neighbors, that's only one family a day with an additional family added on the weekends.

2

Prayer walk your neighborhood, praying for each home as you pass by. Prayer walking is most successful when you go with another person such as spouse, family member, or another follower of Jesus in your neighborhood.

3

After doing a few prayer walks, begin letting your neighbors know in casual conversation that you are praying for them. Ask them if there is something specific they would like you to pray for. Most people will be glad to give you one or two items. Pray for those items during your prayer walk. If appropriate, share them with your Life Group or prayer group at church (keep confidences). A few days later, ask each person how they are doing, or for any updates. Continue prayer walking regularly as you care for and share with your neighbors.

...who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

TITUS 2:14

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

EPHESIANS 2:10

LIFEHOUSES

PRAYER | **CARE** | SHARE

1

As you prayer walk your neighborhood, doors of opportunity will begin to open. As they do, you can show, build, or strengthen bridges of love to your neighbors by serving them and offering to do practical things that they will appreciate. Find out about each family's tangible needs through observation and communication. Keep a record for prayer purposes, as well as for how best to serve particular families. (Please refer to the journal section of this booklet.)

2

CVC Life Houses is a lifestyle based on practical deeds of service and purposeful acts of kindness that followers of Christ do in order to demonstrate the love of God to others. All believers have been created and saved to do good deeds (Ephesians 2:10). All believers are to be zealous to do good deeds (Titus 2:14). This is the way followers of Jesus fulfill the Great Commandment in loving our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39).

3

Love your neighbors by meeting their needs. Do random acts of kindness – mowing a lawn, buying food, baby-sitting, looking out for a job for a person out of work, sending their kid to camp, taking kids to the bus stop while they're away, getting mail for elderly, watching their house while they're away, watching their kids if they need you to, taking them a meal, picking up trash on their lawn, etc.

4

Cultivate your relationship by investing in, hosting, or initiating common activities (block parties, cookouts, sports, etc). Move your life more to the front yard. Open your blinds. Live life in the open. This goes a long way toward building relationships and showing your neighbors that Christ-followers genuinely care for others. As you express care for your neighbors, you actually prepare them to be introduced to a love far greater than yours.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:39



**Jesus said to them again,
“Peace be with you. As the
Father has sent me, even
so I am sending you.”**

John 20:21

**For the Son of Man
came to seek and
to save the lost.**

Luke 19:10

LIFEHOUSES

PRAYER | CARE | **SHARE**

1

We must keep in mind that good deeds, while certainly commendable in and of themselves, must be accompanied by the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ so that others can find new life in Him, too. We do good deeds to create good will so we can share the good news – we do not serve with an ulterior motive, but with an ultimate motive.

2

Jesus has sent His followers into the world just as the Father sent Him into the world (John 20:21) to seek and save those who are lost (Luke 19:10). The Life House movement seeks to gain opportunity for conversation by serving neighbors in sacrificial, practical ways. Jesus said, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17).

3

We are missionaries who engage in practical deeds of service and purposeful acts of kindness in order to share the gospel. We are to engage in missional living as a 24/7/365 lifestyle, not as a program of a church that we can take or leave. It is not to be seen as something we add to our lives. Missional living is to be the normal way we live our lives with our family and in our neighborhoods. We are always on mission.

SHARE

**And Jesus said to them,
“Follow me, and I will make
you become fishers of men.”**

Mark 1:17

**As we build relationships with our neighbors,
we find that their curiosity is awakened. We find
that the opportunity and ability to share our
faith in Christ becomes increasingly natural.**

4

A Life House listens to the story of their neighbors, shares their story when given the opportunity, and then shares God's story when it feels natural and invited.

5

When we share our story we share about our brokenness before knowing New Life in Christ. We also share how through the gospel our lives are restored to God's Design. As we share the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, we can leave the results to God.

6

If a neighbor doesn't respond, we keep praying, caring, and sharing with no strings attached. Again, we do not love and serve them with an ulterior motive, but with an ultimate motive.

SHARE

Imagine how different our neighborhoods would be if we ALL took the initiative to be a Life House.

We don't love and serve our neighbors to convert them; we love and serve our neighbors because we are converted.

**WILL YOU COMMIT
TO BECOMING A
LIFE HOUSE?**

LIFEHOUSES

Ways to serve your neighbor

1. Meet new neighbors with a plate of cookies, a warm welcome, and a 3x5 card with your contact info. Suggest they call you with any questions about the neighborhood such as garbage collection, post office, etc.
2. Take dinner to new parents. Use disposable containers so the clean-up is quick and easy, but consider including one item in a dish that needs to be returned so you can continue the conversation.
3. Plan a neighborhood shower for the new baby. Invite several neighbors to help you.
4. Check on homebound or elderly neighbors. They might enjoy a personal visit. Take them with you to the store or post office. Before coming home, you might want to “splurge” and buy them lunch or ice cream.
5. As you learn about your neighbor’s interests, think about sharing books, magazines, or articles that would interest them.
6. Pick up newspapers, mail, etc. for neighbors who go on vacation.
7. When you bake, make a few extra cupcakes, cookies, or pies to share with a neighbor.
8. See if a neighbor wants to start walking with you. Be sure you listen more than you talk.
9. When you take clothes or other items to donate to a charity, ask your neighbors if they have something they would like for you to deliver. Better yet, deliver the items together!
10. Organize a playgroup for your children and mothers.
11. Mow the lawn of a neighbor who is traveling or who is ill.
12. Host a garage sale and invite your neighbors to sell their things at your house.
13. Offer to let your neighbors use your tools and yard equipment.
14. Play games like basketball, corn hole, etc. in the front yard rather than in your backyard.
15. If you run out of a food ingredient, see if your neighbor has extra. Offer to lend items in the future to them when they might be running low on something.
16. Offer to drop off and pick up your neighbors at the airport.

LIFEHOUSES

Ways to serve your neighbor: Apartment living

1. Utilize the laundry room as communal space. Leave a big box of drying sheets and write “Compliments of your neighbors in Apartment 101”
2. Give seasonal gifts. This time of year people are beginning to purchase plants for their balconies. Go ahead and buy some potted plants and pass them around to your neighbors.
3. Host a cookout. Many apartment communities have playgrounds and grills. Host a community cookout. Often the apartment office will donate the hot dogs and hamburgers, and have your neighbors bring a side dish or drink.
4. Borrow something from your neighbor. This may sound counterintuitive, but borrowing something from your neighbor – like a dish or a cup of sugar – is vulnerable. But vulnerability invites relationship. It opens the door for your neighbor to come over and borrow something of yours.
5. Get a doormat and decorations. Make sure your door looks inviting and that your apartment looks lived in. This little bit can make a big difference.
6. Help people move in. If someone is moving into your community, make sure to offer a hand. This is one of the best ways to establish a friendship.
7. Use your pet to connect. If you have a dog and your neighbor has a dog, this is a great opportunity to strike up a conversation and even offer help for their pet.
8. Use the community pool and workout facility. If people are at your community pool or using the workout facility, you know they’re your neighbors!
9. Get to know the people in the leasing office. They usually live in the community, know many of the people, and might be a great resource to help build the community.
10. Be creative. Every person is different and every community is different. Do the bumper stickers on your neighbor’s cars show that you both have the same hobby? Is there something that only you can contribute to the community?

LIFEHOUSES

Ways to serve your neighbor: Winter

1. Invite your neighbors over for a simple meal like soup.
2. Shovel or snow blow a neighbor's driveway or sidewalk.
3. Take a cup of coffee or a set of hand warmers to a neighbor shoveling snow.
4. As spring approaches, give a potted plant as a reminder of New Life.
5. Offer to walk a neighbor's dog on a cold day.
6. Check on your elderly neighbors; offer simple acts of service like bringing them their mail or salting the stairs.
7. Offer to help wrap holiday gifts.
8. Who doesn't need scotch tape at Christmas? Make friends as you give this timely gift in December.
9. Ask a neighbor to go for a walk at a nearby recreation center or shopping mall.
10. Host a Christmas cookie exchange.
11. Invite neighbors to watch a football game.
12. Give neighbors a Christmas ornament with an encouraging note.
13. Pick up a new hobby by connecting with a local organization or club.
14. Be a bookworm at your local library. Make a point to meet the regulars.
15. Hand deliver Christmas cards to your neighbors.
16. Have a party—Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve, Super Bowl, Valentine's Day.

LIFEHOUSES

Conversation Starters

Sometimes, we really want to have New Life Conversations with friends, neighbors and co-workers, but we don't know how to get the conversation turned toward spiritual things. In a book entitled, *God Space*, author Doug Pollock lists 99 questions that he calls "wondering questions." Here are 20 of our personal favorites (edited).

I Wonder...

1. What are the greatest lessons you feel you've learned so far on your journey?
2. Have you ever had an experience in which you've felt the presence of God?
3. In what ways have you seen good and evil played out in your life?
4. What's the best advice you ever received?
5. What's your dream job?
6. How did you meet your husband/wife?
7. What concerns you most when you think about the future?
8. How would you change the way you were raised?
9. What kind of exposure did you have to religion when you were growing up?
10. How did 9/11 affect your view of God and the world?
11. Do you believe there is a solution to social problems such as rape, murder, famine, war, racism, and divorce?
12. If you could pass along some advice about how to keep a relationship going and growing, what would it be?
13. What dreams in life have you let go of or are you hanging on to?
14. What scares you the most about letting God bring about change in your life?
15. If you had only 6 months to live, what would be on your list of things to do before you died?
16. If you were to choose your path over again, would you choose the same one? Why or why not?
17. Why do we often do what we don't want to do and neglect what we do want to do?
18. Why do you think there are so many different religions?
19. Do you think it's possible for all religions to be equally right? Why or why not?
20. If Jesus were here right now, what would you ask Him? How do you think He would answer?



A LIFE HOUSE STORY

RON DICK | CVC MEMBER

I've been working 6-day weeks for two months. As my one day off, Sunday afternoon is where I usually find myself running errands, cleaning our pond, and working out in the yard until late. I was tight on time this particular Sunday as I served at all 3 church services and had several errands to run. I had my headphones on and was about to mow the lawn when I saw my neighbor Matt out in his yard. I waived "hi" like I usually do and was about to go about my business when a little voice said, "Be a Life House."

I waived "hi" like I usually do and was about to go about my business when a little voice said, "Be a Life House."

I stopped what I was doing, walked over and asked how he'd been and how his new pond was coming along. Eventually the conversation shifted to how busy we've both been. I told him one of the things on

my to do list was cleaning my garage gutters. Matt offered to clean out my gutter that borders on his yard. I told him that in return, I could help him with his pond and would be happy to pick up some supplies for him at a specialty store I visit.

I then let him know that I wanted to be a better neighbor and get to know him and others in the neighborhood better. I know names but not much else. Matt then described to me how the neighborhood used to be much closer many years ago. I suggested we do something so that we could all get to know each other better. I told him I had been thinking about inviting our neighbors over for a cookout sometime. He thought it was a great idea and said that he would love to help with it. Then he said he had a nice time just hanging out at the fence and talking (almost an hour had passed). I told him I enjoyed it as well and look forward to getting to know him better.

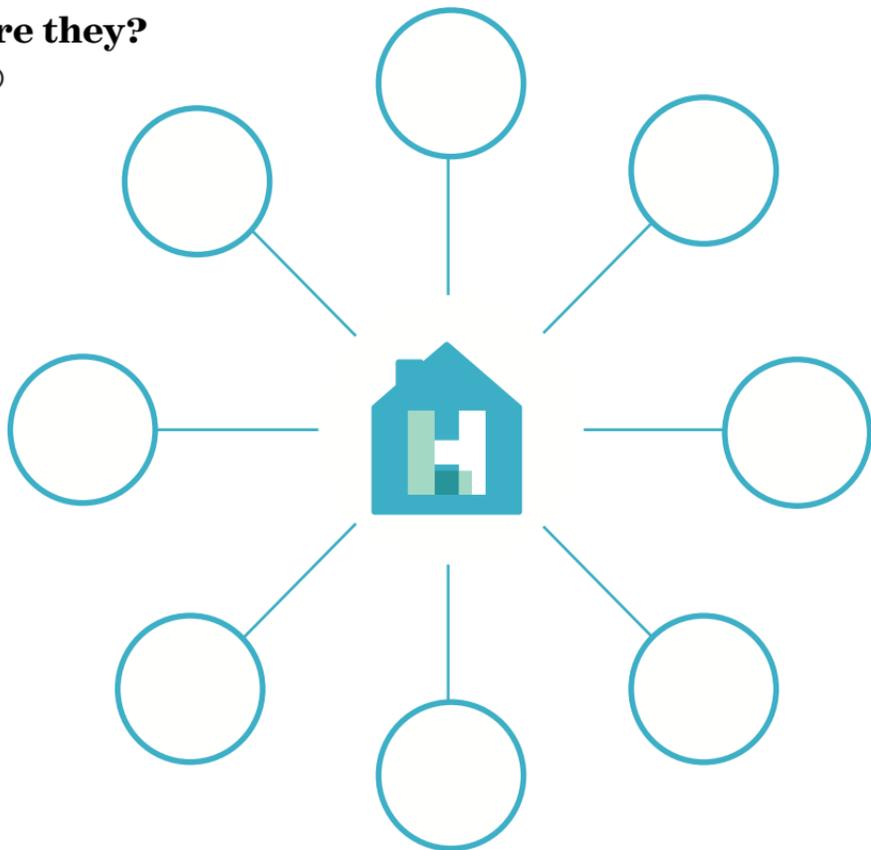
It's a step toward being a Life House.

A blurred background image showing a person walking away from the camera on a paved path. To the right is a tall, dark green hedge. The overall scene is outdoors with greenery and a soft, out-of-focus atmosphere.

WHO ARE MY NEIGHBORS?

Well, who are they?

(MAP THEM OUT)



MY NEIGHBOR:

Names of Adults:

Names of Kids:

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How To Best Serve This Family:

What I see God doing in this family:

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General Info (interests, hobbies, etc.):

Prayer Needs:

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Names of Adults:

Names of Kids:

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MY NEIGHBOR:

Names of Adults:

Names of Kids:

How To Best Serve This Family:

What I see God doing in this family:

General Info (interests, hobbies, etc.):

Prayer Needs:

PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS

Be intentional about praying for your neighbors. Set aside a day each week to pray for each person or family individually (If you have 8 neighbors, you'll pray for two neighbors one day each week).

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday



LIFEHOUSES

Beyond your neighborhood and into your community

Things happen when we pray. God opens doors we could never open. A community saturated in prayer stands uniquely as a place of divine provision and grace.

God has entrusted us with a variety of connections that go far beyond our neighbors and deep into our communities. God has kingdom purposes as we connect with others outside of our homes. When God leads a pattern of prayer, care, and share, God-dependence through prayer is our first response.

We envision Life Houses actively prayer walking our communities. It's simply on-site intercession as we ask God to lead our prayer time and to open our eyes to the needs of the community. Don't worry about doing everything right—take a quick walk asking God to give you eyes to see your community as He does.

“**Things happen when we pray. God opens doors we could never open. A community saturated in prayer stands uniquely as a place of divine provision and grace.**”

LIFEHOUSES

Tips for prayer walking

- Pray for God's direction. Ask God when and where to prayer walk.
- Examine your own heart. Confess any known sin and pray for forgiveness. Then you can pray for your community with a clean heart.
- Focus your prayers by going with a group of friends.
- Pray conversationally.
- Pray quietly. You can be on the scene without making one.
- Pray for the immediate needs of the people and places you see.
- Use scripture to guide your prayers.
- Carry a small Bible or note cards to help.
- Pray regularly; consider walking the same route multiple times to deepen your awareness of the community.
- Thank God for loving your community and pray that people would come to know God.
- Wear comfortable shoes and dress weather appropriate.

You can bless your community when...

You Pray For:

- Churches
- Ministries
- Legal Authorities
- Public Workers
- Schools
- Marriages
- And More

You Pray Against:

- Violence
- Crime
- Hatred
- Greed
- Racism
- Poverty
- Addictions
- And More





Cuyahoga Valley Church | 5055 E. Wallings Rd. Broadview Heights, OH | cvonline.org