

DON'T BE A WEIRDO!!



None of us really wants our neighbors to think we are “weird.” Interesting, unique, maybe even eccentric but not weird. So, how do we follow the commandment to “love our neighbors” without being bothersome, obnoxious, pushy or just plain weird?

Amy Lively confronts this question head-on in her book, **HOW TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR WITHOUT BEING WEIRD**, published by Bethany House (2015). She reminds us that Jesus didn't invite people to join him at meetings or temple gatherings. He invited them into conversation and into a relationship with him. Jesus invited us to love our neighbor as he loved us. In her book, Lively encourages us to enter into relationships with our neighbors by getting to know them.

Yes, strangers often think it is weird for us to confront them with the invitation to join us in church. How much easier it is to be invited to a meal or a cup of tea? How much better to get to know our neighbors and let them get to know us and how God is present in our lives?



Many of us judge our neighbors by the appearance of their house and yard. Is the yard mowed on time? Is there junk strewn across the lawn? Does the house need to be painted or the siding repaired? Lively suggests that by getting to know our neighbors, we may understand why their home looks



the way it does. A single mom with three children has other things on her mind besides keeping her lawn tidy. A couple taking care of an elderly parent or ill child may decide to spend money and time on medicine instead of paint. Maybe you never see your neighbor outside because she is painfully shy, has lots of allergies or just loves her computer time. The best way to find the answers to these questions is to meet

your neighbor, have some conversations and get to know each of them. Scripture tells us that Jesus spent more time **showing** us God's love



than telling us about it. Our faith tells us we are to act like Jesus so being neighborly is a perfect way to share the message of God's love and grace.

If you don't want to go to your neighbors' homes, then invite them to yours. It is probably easier to invite a larger group for coffee, tea and snacks than to invite one or two strangers over for awkward conversation and long moments of silence. The author of **HOW TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR** gives us concrete ideas of how to meet and build relationships with our neighbors, from hosting an open house to beginning a walking club to a scrapbooking party to organizing a block party, as well as other ideas.

This book isn't about filling the pews in your home church. Many of our neighbors already have their own place to worship. When we build relationships with our neighbors, we open ourselves up to learning about new ministries and new ways to show God's love. Christ calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves. To do this, we must first know our neighbors, then show them the love that God has for each and every one of us. Loving those neighbors isn't weird. It's just plain neighborly.



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