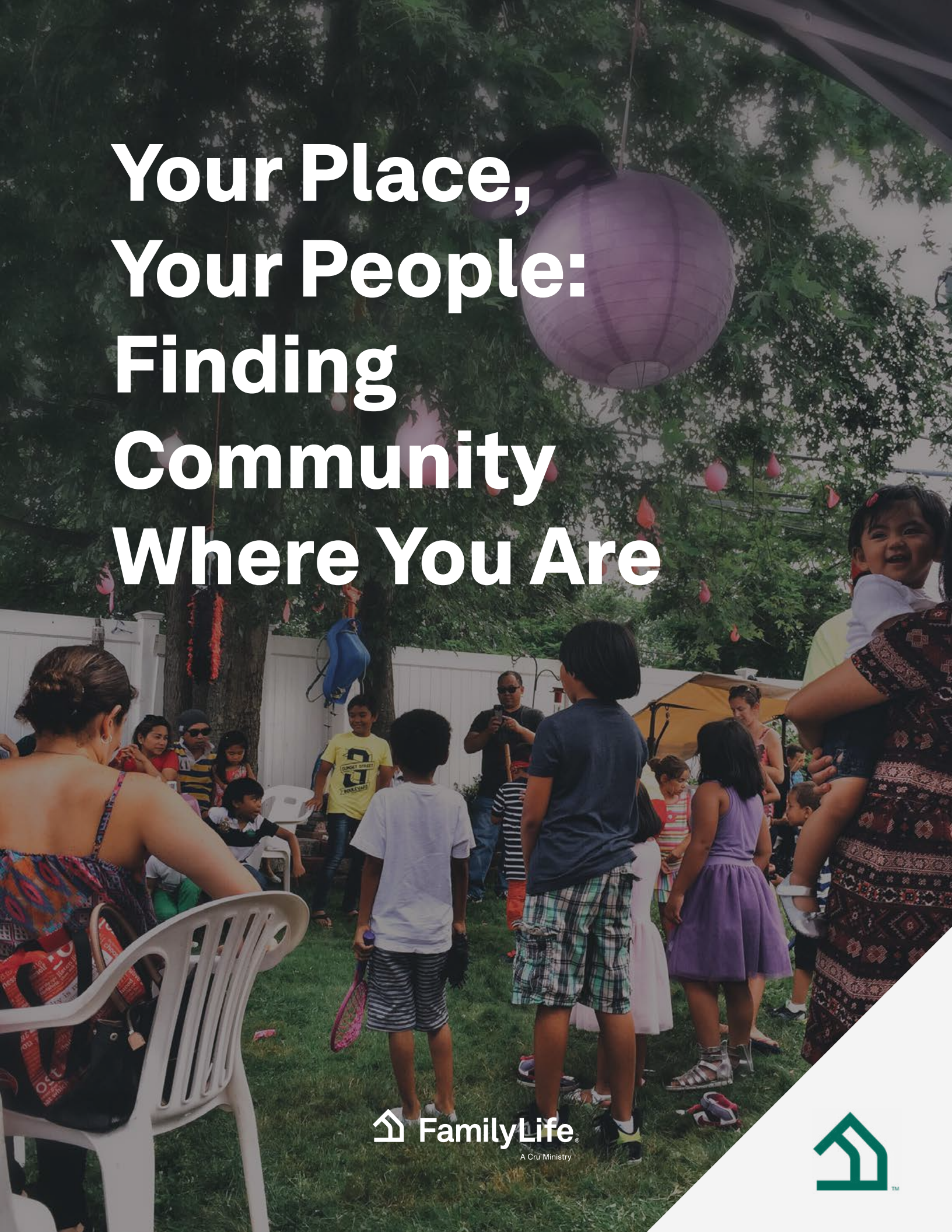


# Your Place, Your People: Finding Community Where You Are



## In a hyperconnected world, how did we get so lonely?

Of course, we feel it in crazy levels of depression, anxiety, angry rhetoric, violence, political polarization. But most of us don't need to look far—because personal isolation is real.

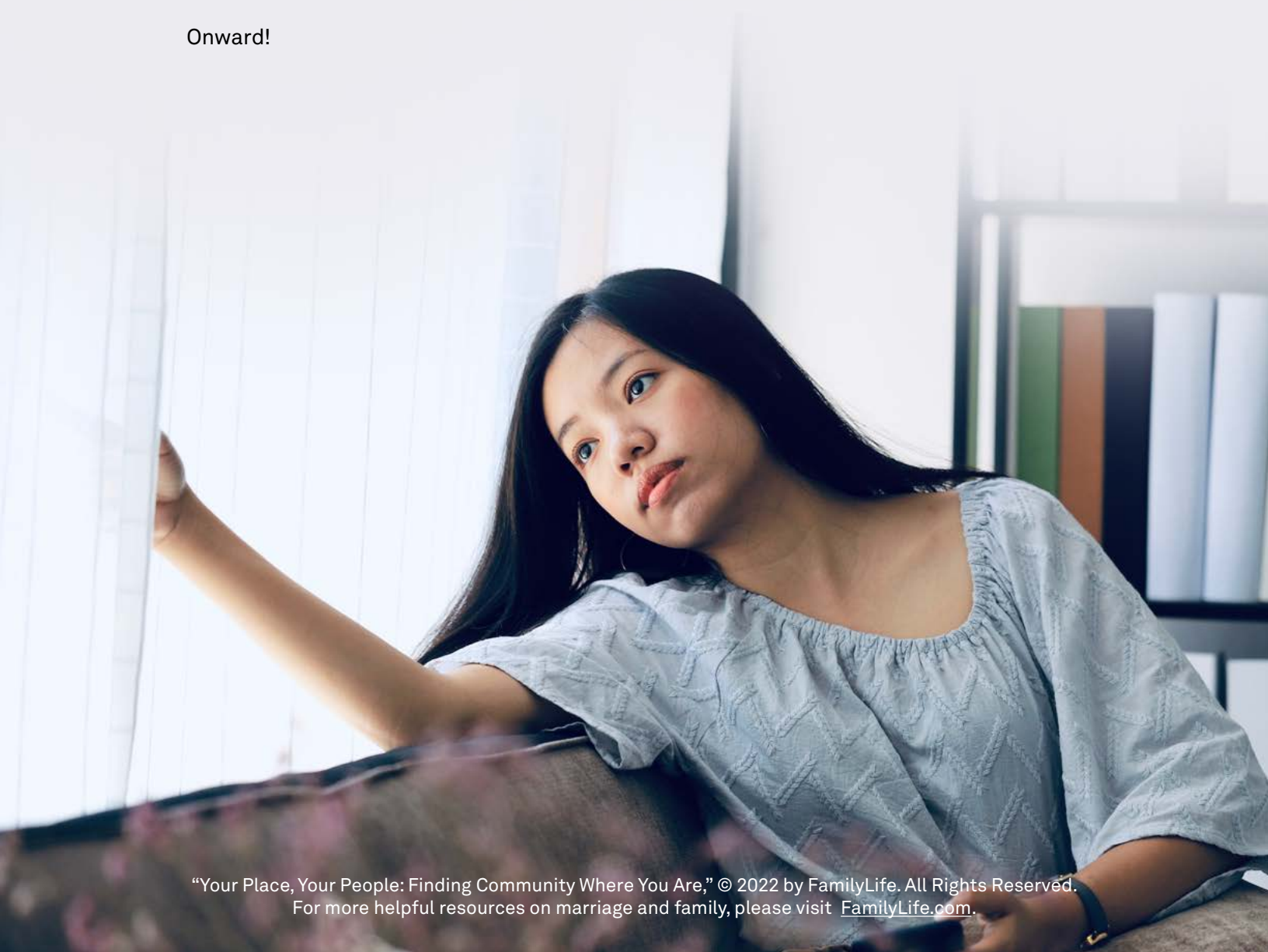
As people who follow the God who initiated relationships with us and “moved into the neighborhood” ([John 1:14, MSG](#)), what does it look like for us to take relational initiative with those around us?

We want to make it easier. In this download, find:

- Ideas to Build Community.
- 12 Prayers for Your Community.
- Brainstorming Map: How Can I Join God as He Works Near Me?

Our God remains passionate about relationships that reflect Him and the neighbors who desperately need His hope.

Onward!





# Ideas To Build Community



- 1) Invite neighbors to pizza or popcorn and a movie on your driveway or lawn using a projector.
- 2) Bring a specialty coffee or smoothie to a neighbor's door.
- 3) Create a small gift basket using items like a pound of coffee, a few muffins, fresh strawberries or grapes, a wrapped wedge of cheese, a box of crackers, and one of the tags below.
- 4) Hold an outdoor barbecue potluck, keeping it simple with compostable plates. Remember: The centerpiece is fellowship.
- 5) Start a book club. If you need to, keep it virtual until all members feel comfortable. (Consider clean fiction that touches on

real issues, but isn't overtly Christian. Hidden agendas are not recommended! Suggestions:

*Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson.

*Eden Mine*, by S.M. Hulse.

*No One Ever Asked*, by Katie Ganshert.


*The Remains of the Day*, by Kazuo Ishiguro.

*Light From Distant Stars*, by Shawn Smucker.

*When the English Fall*, by David Williams.

*The Mountain Between Us*, by Charles Martin.

- 6)** Ask permission to mow someone's lawn—making it clear you just want to be kind (not to take care of a neighborhood eyesore!).
- 7)** Bring a cold beverage to someone working outside: construction workers, landscapers (or DIYers), neighbors mowing the lawn, etc.
- 8)** Deliver small bouquets of flowers wrapped in brown paper, ribbon, and one of our tags below.
- 9)** Send a handwritten note to someone who's struggling, hurting, or could be lonely.
- 10)** Purchase an economy bag of dog and/or cat toys. Wrap each with a ribbon and deliver to pet owners with one of the tags below.
- 11)** Create a "bike wash" for neighborhood kids using sprinklers, hoses, soapy water. Encourage them to wear their bathing suits or clothes that can get wet. And if it turns into a water fight, all the better!
- 12)** Host a community garden at your house.
- 13)** Bring a surprise pizza to a house of teenagers or college students.
- 14)** Invite international students for dinner before they return to their home nations. Offer that if it's easy, they can bring a treat from their home country.
- 15)** Invite kids from the neighborhood to draw on your driveway with sidewalk chalk you provide.
- 16)** Host a parade for the neighborhood kids, encouraging them to decorate their bikes, scooters, and wagons, and bring their pets. Hand out small awards for most creatively decorated, friendliest pet, etc.
- 17)** Deliver packets of seeds or a small, easy-care plant, possibly bundled with an inexpensive trowel or pot.
- 18)** For a friend going on vacation, ask if there's any way you can help with keeping an eye on the house, picking up the newspaper from the drive, etc.
- 19)** Invite someone for a neighborhood walk—dogs and strollers welcome!
- 20)** Plan a block party.
- 21)** Invite others to community events with you: the farmers market, a festival at the park, an art walk downtown.
- 22)** Deliver a small tree from the Arbor Day Foundation.
- 23)** Coordinate a neighborhood cleanup day that culminates with refreshment at your house.
- 24)** If you have small kids, coordinate with a mom in your neighborhood to attend library storytime together.
- 25)** Invite a fellow dog owner to the dog park.

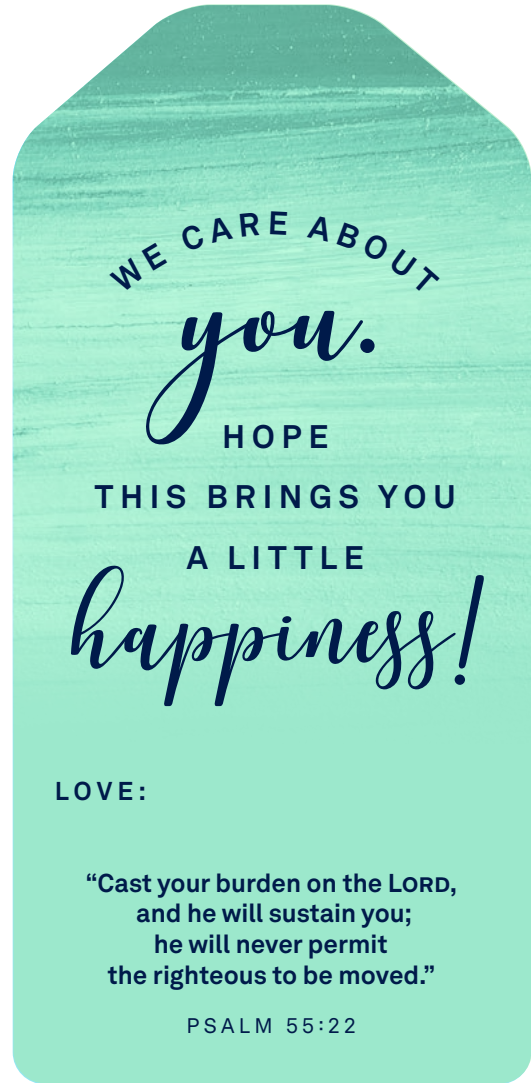


*We care about you.  
Hope this brightens your day!*

LOVE:

**“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”**

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23



WE CARE ABOUT  
*you.*  
HOPE  
THIS BRINGS YOU  
A LITTLE  
*happiness!*

LOVE:

**“Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.”**

PSALM 55:22



So thankful  
you're our neighbor.  
Hope this brings a smile!

LOVE:

**“...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”**

1 PETER 5:7



# 12 Prayers for Your Community



*Open up ways for us to introduce our community to You! Show us new, relevant ways to meet the needs of our community on Your behalf. Give us wisdom, the ability to see people and their needs, hearts that hear You, and holy creativity.*

*“I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.” 1 CORINTHIANS 16:8-9*

*“And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” EPHESIANS 5:2*

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*You've placed me and these community members here on purpose. Expose my personal hurdles to building relationships and talking about the hope I've found. Help me change.*

“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, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us...” ACTS 17:26-27

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience...” 1 PETER 3:15-16, NIV

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*Make Yourself famous here. Make Yourself known for who You really are—not false ideas.*

“Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! ... Say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns!’” PSALM 96:3, 10

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*Reveal to my community the ways they need You and long for You—the ways they're unsatisfied at the soul level.*

“They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”  
JEREMIAH 2:13

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*Activate and motivate Christians in our community. Give us vision and passion for those around us.*

“Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

MATTHEW 9:38

“And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left...?” JONAH 4:11

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*Create genuine connections between us.*

“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

ROMANS 12:10

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*Move the hearts of our leaders. Use them for Your perfect plans.*

“The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.” PROVERBS 21:1

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*Defeat existing spiritual powers here. Remove everything keeping people from following You.*

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” EPHESIANS 6:12





*Fuel our work and effectiveness with Your Holy Spirit.*

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ACTS 1:8



*Work around and in the hearts of our community. Please go before and within and after us.*

“As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.” MATTHEW 13:23

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.” JOHN 6:44



*Let our love for You and others make us brave.*

“Keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication ... that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel ... that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.” EPHESIANS 6:18-20



*Amplify what You're doing inside of us. Draw attention to Yourself in this place. Help people see You're our true motivation and the true source of love, hope, and change.*

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” MATTHEW 5:16



# Brainstorming Map:

HOW CAN I JOIN GOD AS HE  
WORKS NEAR ME?

But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working...the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”

(JOHN 5:17,19)

## God’s working around you. Where could He be tugging you to join Him?

No, you don’t need to feel obligated to directly impact all 1,346 of your Insta followers. Sometimes breadth comes at the expense of depth.

But by paying attention and seeking to make the most of every opportunity God slides your way (Ephesians 5:16)—who knows what eternal stuff you could participate in?

*As you brainstorm and answer these questions, pray. Respond to the Holy Spirit’s presence in you.*

1

## Groups of people in my life

Time for a brain dump. Think in groups both small or intimate (kids, family of origin, our Bible study, people in our community) and large (my child's swim team, our church, school parents).

*Tip:* No need to feel guilty about areas you don't interact with as much. In making the most of opportunities, **you'll need to say the right noes to say the right yeses.**

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## People with whom God's given me more connection in these areas

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## Individuals I interact with, unattached to these groups

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### Areas God may be pulling me to interact more intentionally

...whether existing, new, or a way I'd like to get out of my box. (Are there other areas in which I need to step back in order to create capacity for this invitation?)

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### People or groups I'm already caring for who I don't want to neglect

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### People I know are hurting—where I could, possibly should, step in without being weird

Circle those you feel most strongly that you should help—maybe because of your proximity, their lack of other resources, etc. Write any particular reasons you feel this way.

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### Experiences, gifts, resources, passions, abilities, and traits God’s given me for His purposes—and ways I naturally enjoy Him

How are you made, and what causes you to naturally enjoy God? Is it on a walk, or through art, or advocating for the disadvantaged, or sharing a soul-filling meal with true friends? How can you attach your natural motivations to serving those around you?

Make a list, then circle those you’d like to explore using more of.

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### Is there a relationship or area of my life that is not reflecting my faith?

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***Father, what have you been doing around me lately? Where do you want to send me—and what is my first step in that direction?***

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**What are my initial reactions, emotions, and perceived obstacles following these questions? Why? What could God be telling me through those?**

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