

How to Love Your New Neighbor

By Amy Lively for Just Moved Ministry

Job changes once moved me, my husband, and our daughter (plus a dog, and don't forget the goldfish) from Ohio to Tennessee to South Carolina then back to Ohio in less than two years. We referred to our old houses as our old-*old* house and our old-*old-old* house! Last year, we made yet another move to Colorado.

Somewhere on that journey God broke my heart for my neighbors and I decided to get serious about Christ's #2 Command:

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 22:37-39 NLT

Having been on both sides of the moving boxes—unpacking them myself and peeking at my new neighbors doing the same—here's what I've learned about how to love your new neighbor:

When You've Just Moved

GO. You're busy finding the cat food and making beds and wondering why you moved fruit cocktail that expired two years ago (ok, maybe that's just me...). But take a break, take a deep breath, and go meet a neighbor. This is a perfectly natural time to say, "Hi, I'm Amy, we just moved in across the street so I wanted to say hello."

KNOW. To remember your neighbors' names, create a contact on your phone. Add the word "NEIGHBOR" so you can quickly search these new, nearby friends.

SHOW. Invite a neighbor into your home—they're dying to see what it looks like! You've got the perfect excuse for a messy house and you'll be amazed how home fellowship fast-tracks the friendship process.

When Your Neighbor Just Moved

GO. You know she's busy, but if you don't introduce yourself soon it may be years before you get the courage or opportunity (ok, maybe that's just me...). The best time to meet your new neighbor is within a week or two after she moves in. The second-best time is *now*.

KNOW. Write down your name and your family's names, your address, and phone number. Invite her to any online neighborhood networks like Facebook groups or NextDoor. Stop by your local visitor's center and pick up local maps and brochures of your favorite restaurants, doctors and stores. I still refer to the welcome packet my neighbor, Tricia, delivered to my door!

SHOW. Invite a new neighbor into your home, and a few other neighbors as well. When a new neighbor hosted a lovely luncheon to introduce me to her friends, I was delighted by her hospitality and graciousness—and I went home with more friends than I could have met on my own.

Go to your new neighbor's home, know that God has placed you in your neighborhood for a purpose, and show God's kindness in the process.

Amy Lively is a speaker and the author of *How to Love Your Neighbor Without Being Weird*. She provides tips and tools for Christ's #2 command, drawing from her own experience knocking on her neighbors' doors and leading a women's neighborhood Bible study. Learn more at howtoloveyourneighbor.com.



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Start an *After the Boxes Are Unpacked* study
- Video streaming available soon for each session of the NEW Video Series



A friend is a trusted confidant to whom I am mutually drawn as a companion and an ally, whose love for me is not dependent on my performance, and whose influence draws me closer to God. - Jerry and Mary White, *Friends & Friendship*

*The Friend Who Moves With You

By Susan Miller

When we move, so many of the things we leave behind can be replaced rather quickly and life then resumes its pace with a fairly normal rhythm. Friendships are the exception. The void created by the absence of a dear friend leaves a gaping wound in our hearts and the longing for shared intimacy keeps us out of step with the world around us.

The friend you're looking for has been there all along. You were so busy, you missed feeling His presence. You were so desperate to find a friend that you overlooked the best Friend of all.

Jesus is your go-to friend, no doubt about it. You can always lean on Him, and He'll always be there to catch you. *No matter where you move, He's gone before you, He's got your back, and He walks beside you.* He will be there when you need him to listen to your heart, to fill the emptiness, and to comfort you. Embrace Him as a friend *first*. In His perfect timing, He will bring new friends to fill your life.

When any of my friends move, I give them a special going-away present. In a gift bag I include a small bird's nest with tiny eggs (from a craft store), a wooden or plastic egg, a bookmark I create that says, "Bloom Wherever You're Planted", a small mirror, and a six-inch piece of white rope with a pink ribbon tied around it.

As I give the gift bag to them I say, "The first thing you must do when you move is to make your nest a home. Weave it with the fruit of the Spirit. Second, borrow an egg from a neighbor (or anything else you might need.) It's all about getting a conversation started. This is the easiest way to meet your neighbor and start a friendship. Third, put this bookmark in your Bible as a reminder to find a church. After that, you must look in this mirror as a reminder that it all begins with you. And finally, hold on tight to this rope. It's a reminder of God's love, His Word, and His promises woven into your life."

Many of my friends tell me that they still have these little reminders and have followed these simple steps to help them adjust. Can you pretend that I just gave that same little going away gift to you? Let it be a reminder that I care about you as you move, just as I do about my other moving friends.

*Look for This Kind of Friend

By Susan Miller

When you follow Jesus as a way of life, you will want to look for a friend:

- who is an extension of Jesus Christ, not a substitute for Him.
- who will love you unconditionally and accept you as you are, as she points you toward Jesus.
- who will walk with you through thick and thin, as she reminds you that Jesus cares and understands.
- who will pray with you and for you.
- who will teach you about Jesus through how she lives her life and the choices she makes.
- who carries a triple-A card, like Jesus did! Jesus was Available, Accessible, and Authentic. Look for someone who is all three.



*Excerpts from *After the Boxes are Unpacked* by Susan Miller. Available at JustMovedShop.com

15 Good Habits for Developing Solid Friendships

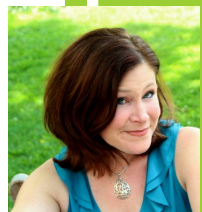
By Ginger Harrington

1. Take the initiative to invite friends to do things rather than waiting for someone else to initiate.
2. Be an encourager. Develop the habit of cheering for others and celebrating friends.
3. Stop feeling guilty about spending time with friends. Seriously, stop it!
4. Be intentional. Don't let busyness crowd out friendship. The busier you are, the more important it is to plan ahead for time with friends.
5. Keep confidences. When a friend asks you not to repeat information, honor that request.
6. Share the load. Volunteer to help, to listen, or to console when it is needed.
7. Be real. Be brave about sharing your needs and struggles when appropriate.
8. Ask good questions that draw others into meaningful conversation. Small talk has its place, but sharing our real stories draws people together.
9. Don't monopolize conversations or only talk about yourself. Give the gift of a listening ear.
10. Give a thoughtful gift or send a note of encouragement. Texting is great, but old-fashioned snail mail never gets old.
11. Avoid the trap of comparison and envy. Recognize these destructive thoughts and get rid of them.
12. Be careful with expectations. Many feelings get hurt due to unrealistic or unmet expectations. Sometimes we don't even realize we have them.
13. Be quick to give and ask for forgiveness. Treat others the way you want to be treated in this difficult area of relationships.
14. Let go of judgment and criticism. Give others the benefit of the doubt.
15. Give your friend the biggest piece of cake. (I learned this one from my mama.) And don't hog the last piece of chocolate...

We may not be able to do all of these things at the same time or keep it up all the time, but we can all do some of these things more often. Friendship is an art built on good habits of relationships. Which one of these habits has made a difference in your friendships? Which one do you want to work on?

Ginger Harrington is a military spouse, a mom, a speaker, and a blogger.

Learn more about Ginger and read the full list at gingerharrington.com/25-good-habits-for-the-art-of-friendship/



I think if I've learned anything about friendship, it's to hang in, stay connected, fight for them, and let them fight for you. Don't walk away, don't be distracted, don't be too busy or tired, don't take them for granted. Friends are part of the glue that holds life and faith together. Powerful stuff.

- Jon Katz

When we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.

— Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life*

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