

HOPE GROUPS



HOPE GROUP – INTERGENERATIONAL PILGRIMAGE WALK 3 – NEIGHBOUR

Pilgrimages are religious journeys which people take to learn more about God and faith. Whilst we are not currently able to go very far and can only leave home for an hour, we can still go on pilgrimages.

Why not decide on a pilgrimage walk and invite someone else or another family to do the same walk. Even though you are not able to walk it together, you can share what you discovered and talked about afterwards.

BEGINNING

Begin each walk in the same way:

- gather together quietly
- light a candle saying, 'This candle reminds me/us that God's light will never be extinguished.'
- pray:
*Creator God,
Guide my/our feet as I/we walk this pilgrimage today.
Open my/our eyes to see your goodness.
Open my/our ears to hear your call.
Even though I/we walk alone,
I/we know others walk this pilgrimage too.
Amen*
- blow out the candle and start your pilgrimage
- at the end of each section, ask for a volunteer to lead a prayer if you are a family or pray your own prayer if you are a sole pilgrim.

NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOURS

Who are your neighbours?

Do you know their names? What do they like to do?
Do you know where they work or go to school?

What is a 'neighbour'?

This is a pilgrimage walk you can do at home by looking through your window or by walking around your block. Begin by reading this text from Luke.

LUKE 12:28-34



One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' ²⁹Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;" ³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' ³²Then the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "he is one, and besides him there is no other"; ³³and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength", and "to love one's neighbour as oneself",—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' ³⁴When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that no one dared to ask him any question.



Start by thinking of those living on either side of you.

Do you know their names?

Offer a blessing for each of them.

Is there something you can do to show you care? If it is safe to do so, perhaps leave a drawing and note in the mailbox, perhaps bake some muffins and leave them at the door. Simple things like this can make someone's day, and we never really know if someone is struggling or putting on a good show of coping.

If you are walking, do not forget to acknowledge people as you pass. It is easy to get lost in our own thoughts or, if we are walking with someone else, it is easy to become engrossed in conversation. Some people walking will be missing personal contact with others and a simple hello (or wave as we are wearing masks) can offer a little hope.

COMMUNITY NEIGHBOURS

Who else can you see from your window, or who's house are you walking past?

Our communities are made up of many different people, some live alone and others with families. Some have pets, some have more than one car, others enjoy gardening. What are you noticing about your local community neighbours?

Without passing judgement on anyone else, what clues do people's houses give away about them? Some people like native plants, others prefer cottage gardens. Some people do not like gardening at all and might remove grass so there is no mowing. We are all different.

Bless each house as you walk past or see them from your window.

This reading from Galatians tells us to support and care for each, putting our own needs behind the needs of others, not hurting each other. How does this make you feel? Does it offer you a different way of thinking about your neighbours?

GALATIANS 5:13-15



For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' ¹⁵If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

What is this reading from Leviticus saying? It's the law the Scribe is quoting in the earlier Luke reading.

LEVITICUS 19:17-18



You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbour, or you will incur guilt yourself. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.

DEFINING 'NEIGHBOUR'

Who is your neighbour?

The story of the Good Samaritan answers this perfectly. It is never the easy person but the one who demands of us. This is hard to deal with when we are dealing with our own issues. How do we manage this? How can we help our neighbour when we are struggling ourselves?

LUKE 10:26-37



Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' ²⁶He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' ²⁷He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' ²⁸And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

²⁹But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' ³⁰Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by



chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' ³⁷He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

'Neighbour' is not just the person who lives around the corner or next door. We are a global community. Our neighbours are those living on the other side of the world – those living in countries where our clothing and other products are made, those living in refugee centres, anyone anywhere.

Here is a story about a simple act of love for a neighbour. How does this make you feel? How could you bless someone in this way? When we bless someone, we are reflecting the love God shows to us.

Being the strong wife and mother that she is, Pamela often hid her deep pain and suffering from those around her. In the weeks and months following her husband's death, Pamela would search for "hiding" places where she could let the uncontrollable waterfalls of painful tears flow from her eyes.

One day, as she was about to place her order in the Maccas drive-thru, the wave of sadness hit her like a tidal wave. "I could barely catch my breath and the ugly crying started," said Pamela. "The problem was, I was stuck in the coffee line. The one place where all the workers are young, happy and jamming out to music. And there was no way out. I was literally blocked in, so unless I wanted to back right up into the SUV behind me, I was about to be seen for the mess I really was."

The barista at the window handed Pamela an iced coffee with a sweet and simple note scribbled on the top. "When I looked down in the cup holder, I saw it. A pink straw, and the words 'We love you' written around it."

The girl didn't know Pamela's pain or her story, but she knew she was hurting and couldn't fix it. The ironic thing about it is that in loving her neighbour, the barista was used by God to bring comfort that surpasses all understanding.

"She wanted me to know I wasn't alone. And that whatever trial I was going through, that there were people out there who cared about me. That regardless of knowing all the details, they cared anyway."

