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KAREN WILK

DON'T INVITE THEM TO CHURCH

Moving From a Come and See
to a **GO AND BE CHURCH**



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Moving From a Come and See
to a GO AND BE CHURCH

KAREN WILK

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Dedication

This guidebook is dedicated to all those who long for something more:

- to see God's kingdom come
- to live out the "sentness" of God's calling
- to experience true community in keeping the Great Commission and the two greatest commandments

It's for those who long for the courage and conviction to become who God made them to be, to be the presence of Jesus where they are, and to join the myriad people throughout the centuries who counted the cost and sold everything.

—KW

Acknowledgments

This book grew out of *Living Dangerously*, an eight-week guide designed and written for The River Community Church in Edmonton, Alberta. I am grateful to those who engaged in that journey in the fall of 2009. Their input and participation helped reshape the material into its current form. Their stories also enrich and concretize the principles and pursuits described here. Particular thanks go to people who stepped up and stepped out and are now on the journey in their neighborhoods, where every day affords a new adventure as they partner with God in bringing his kingdom near!

Special thanks also to the staff and leadership of The River Community Church who dedicated several months of the church year to this endeavor, preached a number of messages in connection with it, and allowed their hearts and lives to be shaped by it. Podcasts of those Sunday morning messages can be found on the church's website at www.rivercommunity.ca.

Howard Lawrence, director of Neighborhood Life for Forge Canada and a “lifer” in neighborhood groups, also contributed to this book through his passion, wisdom, commitment, and experience. Without him going before us and encouraging us, this project would hardly have been possible. In the same way, I want to thank Forge Canada and in particular its national director, Cam Roxburgh, who got many of us committed to the missional church conversation and practice.

Finally, I'd like to thank my courageous and committed husband, Steve, who has been an amazingly willing participant and partner as we have sought to live out this journey, and who gave up lots of “personal vegging out” time for the sake of the kingdom and for love of neighbor.

—Karen Wilk

Introduction

As I was typing away the other day, my daughter asked me what the name of this book was. I told her, and she replied, “What does that mean?” I asked, “What do you think it means?” She said, “I know what it means, Mom: you don’t want Christians to invite people to church, you want them to love their neighbors and *be* the church.”

Wow. At age thirteen, she gets it. In three words, that is what this book is about: loving our neighbors.

So if a thirteen-year-old gets it, why do we need a whole guide-book devoted to loving our neighbors? Because, truthfully, most of us aren’t doing it very well. Knowing those three words as the second greatest commandment doesn’t mean we know how to live them actively, faithfully, and intentionally.

In this book we’ll wrestle with the practical meaning of loving our neighbors. We’ll ask questions like these:

- What if there is something more to the Second Commandment than just trying to be “nice” to everyone?
- What if you actually loved your neighbor and were the presence of Jesus where you live, where God has placed you right now?
- What if believers who lived in the same neighborhood formed a *communitas* (a community with a mission) right where they lived, whose purpose was to make their neighborhood a place where the values of God’s kingdom become more visible and real . . . and others noticed and wanted to be part of it?

This book raises questions, makes confessions, and seeks answers. But mostly it invites you to pursue the calling and challenge of loving your neighbor, not just with words but in postures and practices.

Jesus used this illustration: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough” (Matt. 13:33). As we seek to live out our love for our neighbors, perhaps, like yeast in dough, we will have more impact than we might ever imagine. Perhaps we will experience God’s kingdom come in new and astonishing ways. Perhaps some dough will rise.

How to Use This Guidebook

Don't Invite Them to Church is designed to help you, your small group, or your whole church learn what it truly means to love your neighbors. It's designed, as the subtitle says, to help you move from being a “come and see” church to a “go and be” church. It's about becoming missional people whose daily walk matches our talk.

If you work through this guidebook as a congregation or a small group, the intent is that you meet together as a group once a week for eight weeks. In these group sessions you'll encourage each other, tell your stories, and learn how to better love your neighbor.





Here's how this guidebook is organized:

Stories from the Journey

God is taking my family and me on a journey into neighborhood living. Each week begins with a story from that journey. While my story is different from your story, my hope is that our adventures will help you begin to imagine and grapple with your own expedition into neighborhood life as you pursue the journey yourself and with your group.

Pursuits of the Week

Each week you'll practice four “pursuits” (see p. 10 for in-depth information about each of these):

-  Sideward (group meeting)—grow with the members of your group and reflect together on missional living
-  Upward—grow in your personal relationship with God
-  Inward—grow in your own spiritual life
-  Outward—grow in your love for neighbor

Time with God's Word: Day 1 of each week will be your group meeting. For Days 2-7, we provide devotional readings, experiences in spiritual disciplines, and thought questions to help you on your journey.

Life Stories and Quotables

In this guidebook you will also find true-life stories from your sisters and brothers who have begun to step out into neighborhood life. We hope these stories will inspire, motivate, and empower you to do the same.

Throughout, you will also find Quotables, which are tidbits of wisdom and experience from the “experts” who have been pursuing missional church for a long time. They are there for you to ponder on your own and with your group.

Each of the components described above has the same goal: equipping, empowering, and encouraging you to love your neighbor and be the presence of Jesus—his kingdom come—in your neighborhood. Like any important practice, they will require some time, effort, and attention.

As you come to the end of this guidebook, your group can continue to shape its life together around the four pursuits (see Next Steps), supporting, encouraging, and loving one another “that others might know.”

I am so thankful and excited that you are joining this journey of rediscovering the art and the power of good neighboring. As Paul said to the Thessalonians, “May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you” (1 Thess. 3:12).

If you have comments, questions, stories to share, or would like me to come alongside you or your group or congregation in other ways, please feel free to contact me at karen.wilk@forgecanada.ca.

The Pursuits: Practices and Postures

As mentioned previously, each week you'll practice four "pursuits"—practices to shape your living as you grow in love for your small group, your God, yourself, and your neighbor.

Sideward Pursuits

"Be devoted to one another in love" (Rom. 12:10).

The first pursuit each week is the side-by-side (or "sideward") pursuit, otherwise known as your group meeting time. This is your opportunity to get to know each other better, discuss, share, and pray about what you've learned the week before. During the group meeting you'll also look ahead to the pursuits you'll practice on your own during the coming week.

The material for these gatherings is designed to help you grow together as a group. It includes community-building suggestions and discussion questions. The goal of your weekly gathering, however, is not to "get through the questions." The goal is personal and communal nurture and engagement. Make the most of this opportunity to connect, support each other, bless and be blessed, and pray with and for one another and your neighbors.

As you begin this journey, commit to participating every week, to sharing honestly, and to pushing each other to fuller life in community.

Upward Pursuits

"Jesus replied, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment'" (Matt. 22:37-38).

In keeping with the first and greatest commandment, we need to engage in upward pursuits that draw us into a closer relationship with God. There are many such practices: prayer, meditating on Scripture, and silence, to name a few. We'll progress through

eight such postures and practices to help us walk with Jesus as his sent people.

Inward Pursuits

“And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18).

As we move upward and sideward, God reshapes us and helps us conform more and more to the image of Christ. The inward pursuits in this guidebook focus on the character traits of mature believers as recorded in 2 Peter 1:3-8. God longs for us to be holy as he is holy. Christ calls us to be imitators of him. Our character, integrity, and authenticity are critical to our witness, because we are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14).

Outward Pursuits

“And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37).

The fourth pursuit is the outward one. This pursuit gives us tangible ways to keep the second great commandment. One of the amazing realities of this posture and practice is that it’s actually great fun and very rewarding. Neighbors *like* connecting and getting to know each other. They also like serving and sharing and feeling that they belong and matter.

As we engage in outward pursuits, we also find ourselves engaging in the Great Commission without turning people into projects and making them and ourselves uncomfortable. That is one of the most exciting and enjoyable parts of starting this journey. The pressure’s off! Your mission, your calling, is simply to love your neighbors—not to get them to attend church, say a certain prayer, confess, profess, renounce, or repent. That’s God’s work. Your work is to testify in word and deed to God’s love. As you do that, you’ll find that the Spirit does marvelous things.

Time with God's Word

“. . . My word that goes out from my mouth . . . will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isa. 55:11).

Willow Creek's recent study of 80,000 people in 200 congregations found that the best catalyst for spiritual growth, whether for explorers or for committed Christ-centered people, is reflection on God's Word. So this guidebook includes “Time with God's Word”: passages from the Bible related to the weekly theme, along with reflection questions.

Since Day 1 of the week is reserved for your group meeting, the Time with God's Word section begins on Day 2 of each week. Day 2 always includes a brief reflection to take you deeper into the theme of the week. You may choose to read and think about it on it on Day 2, or whenever you have a little more time to reflect on the text.

In any case, take your time in God's Word. Try to set aside at least fifteen minutes each day to pray, meditate, and reflect. Many Christians find that their reflection on the Word is enhanced when they journal—an ancient practice of writing down responses, prayers, thoughts, and feelings. Something seems to happen (the Spirit moves/speaks?) when we actually record what's happening inside, and it's always enlightening to look back and see how God has been at work.

If you wish, you can reflect on Time with God's Word with a friend, a spouse, or your family. If you do this, be sure everyone has a chance to process and respond.

GO BACK—I AM SENDING YOU!

Stories from the Journey

My family's journey started when my husband, Steve, and I decided to truly connect with our neighbors. We were acquainted with a few of them primarily through our kids' activities, but there was little more to our relationships. Our children went to a Christian school and we were very involved in our church (after all, I am a pastor). Who had the time or energy for neighbors? Truth be told, we were more likely to avoid talking to our neighbors (we had things to do, places to go, people to see) than we were to stop and visit with them.

But after a while you have to pay attention to the angst in your soul. Something was missing. Even though we were part of what most would call a “successful church plant” shaped on the missional model, I wasn’t sure we were really connecting with the people we lived near who needed to know how much God loved them and how good his kingdom is.

If God is a sending God and we are his sent ones, surely that must mean more than inviting people to church or to “our” events, programs, and services—no matter how great they are. Can the light, the salt, the sweet aroma of Christ really expect the darkness, the unreserved, and those who long for a better smell, *to come to them?*

Of course, I wasn’t thinking about any of this on the December evening when I was designing and printing invitations to our family’s first Christmas Open House. I was thinking about whether anyone in our neighborhood would come and what I should serve and how awkward the silences might be. Still, we folded the colorful invitations and put them in the mailboxes of everyone on our street (because we were too chicken to knock on their doors).

The day arrived, the house was decorated, and the table was spread with sweet treats, appetizers, Christmas punch, hot apple cider, and more. The first couple rang the doorbell and before the woman had her coat off and we had introduced ourselves she blurted out, “We just had to come to see who would do such a thing—inviting strangers into their home!”

And so began our journey into the joy and richness of neighborhood life.

WEEK 1 PURSUITS

Sideward Pursuit (Group Meeting): Welcome One Another

BEING COMMUNITY

“So reach out and welcome one another to God’s glory. Jesus did it; now *you* do it!” (Rom. 15:7, *The Message*).

When a group like yours starts out on a new adventure with a new commitment, there is usually both anticipation and some fear or anxiety. So have a welcome celebration! This week’s gathering is meant to build a sense of community by the power of a warm welcome. It’s a theme that resonates throughout Scripture as we hear the call to extend hospitality and to celebrate together the goodness of God and the life he gives us.




Make your first get-together one of food and fun. Try a potluck, an international dinner, a progressive dinner, or a “make your own sundae” (everyone brings a topping). Have a campfire. Play some icebreaker games. Do whatever you think will make people feel welcome and comfortable.

Christians should never underestimate the value of a good party, by the way. Jesus did his first miracle at a wedding party (John 2:1-10). He was anointed for his burial at a dinner party (Luke 7:36-50). The Pharisees criticized Jesus because they thought he was too much of a “partier” (Luke 7:34). When Jesus spoke of the kingdom of heaven, he called it a banquet (Luke 14:15-24). When a sinner repents, heaven throws a party (Luke 15:5-7, 9-10, 22-24).

INTRODUCE THE JOURNEY

- Before your first gathering, invite participants to read through the introductory pages of this guidebook.
- After your welcome celebration, give everyone an opportunity to share why they joined this group and what they hope to get out of this journey together.
- Take some time to review the format of this guidebook and its relationship to the group meeting. If participants did not receive their guidebooks prior to this gathering, read through the opening pages together.

PREPARE FOR THE PURSUITS OF THE WEEK

- Introduce and discuss each of the other postures and practices for this week:
 -  **Upward:** Breath Prayer
 -  **Inward:** Faith
 -  **Outward:** Identifying your Neighborhood/Missional Context
 - Pose these questions: Which of these pursuits will be most challenging for you? What are you looking forward to? How can your group support/pray for you as you begin the adventure of learning to love your neighbors?
 - Pray for one another and your neighborhoods.
-

Practice the following upward, inward, and outward pursuits on your own this week. Plan to complete them before your next group meeting.

Upward Pursuit: Breath Prayer

“Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment’” (Matt. 22:37-38).

We begin our upward pursuit by learning to pause and become more aware of God's constant presence with us. "I am with you" was the promise and assurance of God's presence made not only to Moses, but to saints throughout the ages. It was affirmed again in Jesus' parting words, "I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20).

Set aside some time each day to open your heart to God by praying a "Breath Prayer." A good time to take this posture is right before you do the "Time with God's Word" exercises (see pp. 21-26). Here's how to practice this type of prayer:

- Get into a comfortable but alert position, sitting with your hands in your lap, palms upward (an open, receptive posture).
- Close your eyes and relax your whole body, starting with your feet and moving up to your head. Be still.
- Focus on your breathing. Don't *change* your breathing, just be aware of it. If (or when) your mind wanders, gently bring it back to your breathing. Clear everything else from your mind for now.
- Repeat this line over and over again as you breathe in and out: *Breathe on me, breath of God, breathe on me.*
- While you are breathing in, imagine God's breath—his Spirit, his love, his power, his presence—filling you. Inhale God's grace and peace. Exhale your sins, pain, fear, and doubt. Visualize them being carried away on the breath of God. Stay in this awareness with every breath. Try this for about two minutes.

As the practice of Breath Prayer becomes more familiar to you, you can use it anytime and anywhere. For more on the breath of God, check out Genesis 2:7; Job 32:8; 33:4; Acts 17:28; John 15:4, 7, 9.

Inward Pursuit: Faith

"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world

caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:3-8).

Read the above passage several times. Each week we will strive to understand and live out one of the characteristics listed in it. The starting place for “participants in the divine nature” is our faith. So focus on your faith this week.

Faith has been described as BELIEF + TRUST + ACTION. Think and/or journal about the following questions:

- How’s your believing?
- Do you really trust God? Recall (and journal about) some examples.
- Are you acting on what you know, living every day as a “sent one” because you’re confident in God?
- Are you faith-*full*?
- What would have to happen for you to grow in faith?
- What might the Lord be asking you to commit to or receive now, so that your faith might be the grounding for a character molded in Christ’s character?

As you evaluate your faith, be assured that your relationship with God is not dependent on *your* faith. Jesus declares that if we have faith as small as a mustard seed, we will be able to move mountains, and nothing(!) will be impossible for us (Matt. 17:20). In other words, the size of our faith does not determine the outcomes—God does. By his grace and mighty power, mountains are moved and hearts are changed, even ours. Praise God!

Outward Pursuit: Identifying Your Neighborhood

“Forced to leave home base, the followers of Jesus all became missionaries. Wherever they were scattered, they preached the Message about Jesus” (Acts 8:4, *The Message*).

As explained in the introduction, this guidebook isn’t just for *learning about* “missional incarnational living” and loving our neighbors, it’s about *doing it!*

Here is your first challenge: acknowledging where God has placed you. Where we dwell is our primary missional context, as it was for Jesus and his first followers in the young church. We are the presence of Jesus where we live.

Your missional context—your neighborhood—is where your interactions are “S-A-F-E”:

S: Spontaneous—A missional context is a place where we have spontaneous connections with others, such as over the fence, while walking the dog, at the grocery store or gym, wherever we “bump into” each other.

A: Accessible—A neighborhood is a place where we are easily accessible to one another. For example, we can walk across the street or across the hall to borrow a cup of sugar, or call to let each other know when the garage door has been left open.

F: Frequent—In order to nurture relationships, your neighborhood boundaries will identify people whom you encounter (or could encounter) regularly.

E: at Ease—There is something unique about a neighborhood. We live there! And so does God. We are called to be salt and light on our street, where we live among our neighbors. People need to see and know real-life Christ-followers living authentically and genuinely right next door. They see us “with our hair down”—interacting with our kids, taking out the garbage in our bathrobe,

and so on. Your neighborhood is the community in which you are present “as you are.”

Based on these parameters, jot down the “boundaries” of your neighborhood. As you go and grow, you may find that God will

**“We cannot
minimize**

enlarge your neighborhood, but for now start with those immediately around you.

**[missional living]
as something that
is simply part of
the church’s task.
It is the church’s
task.”**

“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish” (John 1:14, *The Message*).

(from “The Missional Church in Suburbia,” a paper by Todd Hiestand, posted on www.toddhiestand.com)

Describe and map your neighborhood—the place where you can develop Spontaneous, Accessible, Frequent, and at Ease relationships. Diagram it with little houses, and on each house write the names of the people (and pets) who live there and anything else

that you know about those neighbors (work, hobbies, needs). Talk with God, your spouse, and/or other believers in your neighborhood, and be prepared to share what you learned at your next group gathering.

LIFE STORY

I committed to working through the booklet *Praying the Lord’s Prayer for Neighbors* for my daily devotions. It suggests that you pick five neighbors on your street and pray for them. I did this. I was amazed when the people across the street (one of my five) then showed up at one of our Sunday morning services. When I talked to them, they told me that they were looking for a church home and were checking us out! —KG

TIME WITH GOD'S WORD

Theme for the Week: **Sending**

“[God said] ‘It’s time for you to go back: I’m sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the People of Israel, out of Egypt.’ Moses answered God, ‘But why me? What makes you think that I could ever go to Pharaoh and lead the children of Israel out of Egypt?’ ‘I’ll be with you,’ God said. ‘And this will be the proof that I am the one who sent you: When you have brought my people out of Egypt, you will worship God right here at this very mountain’” (Ex. 3:10-12, *The Message*).

Do words on the pages of Scripture ever suddenly leap out at you, even in a passage that you have read a hundred times before? That happened to me when I read this passage.

God interrupted Moses’ daily routines, his retirement plans, his timelines, with a directive: “Go back. I am sending you.”

Moses wasn’t so sure about God’s suggested course of action—why would he want to “go back”? Moses was in a place that for forty years had provided him with a safe, secure, predictable environment in the sheltered community of his father-in-law, Jethro. Why would he want to go back to Egypt, where he would be uncomfortable, at risk, and confronted with change? For Moses, it was a moment that would alter the trajectory of his life.

So Moses hesitated. He told God, “I can’t do something like that! Really, I just can’t. Are you sure you want me?”

“Yes,” God said, “I am sending you.”

This sending is a word for us too. But why would the church want to go back? Why would we want to give up comfort, security, stability, familiarity, control, predictability, and routine for

the uncomfortable, risky, unconventional, dangerous, challenging, unpredictable adventure of being sent to be a blessing?

That's why those words jumped out at me. They fit with what God has been stirring up in my heart and mind—unsettling me and my understanding of what it means to be church.

Traditional churches are declining, denominations are losing their voice in society, cathedrals are closing, more and more people seem to be turned off by the institutional church, which once held prominence and loyalty. What is God up to? Can the message really be “Go back”?

Even seeker-sensitive, outreach-focused churches like the one I am a part of, which do everything possible to attract newcomers and make seekers feel welcome and embraced, are beginning to wonder.

Why? Because no matter how attractive we are and how many times we invite them, the people across the street who don't know Jesus and his love aren't coming. Maybe we've made it all too complicated: trying to design the perfect programs, the best worship services, the biggest youth events, the most fun children's activities.

“Go back, I am sending you . . .” That's what the blazing bush in my corner of the world seems to be saying, and those words stop me in my tracks. The God who speaks from burning bushes and through still small voices and mighty winds and angels is the sending God.

God sent Abraham and Esther and Ruth and Deborah and Joshua and Jonah and all the prophets—and then God the Father sent the Son. After the Son died and rose again, he and the Father sent the Spirit. And now the Spirit sends us.

We're sent to go and make disciples—not just to reach out but to *go out*. The sending God is the one who seeks and saves the lost. He doesn't wait for them or seek to attract them to his program. He goes out after them.

Day 2

“I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word” (Ps. 119:16).

Practice the Breath Prayer (p. 16).

If you haven't already, read the theme reflection (p. 21). Then explore these questions:

- What parts of this reflection spoke to you? Why?
- What might God be saying to you, your group, or your church through the reflection?
- What does it mean to you that we are a “sent people”?
- What might be a first step for you in rethinking your identity and calling as “a sent one”? When will you take it?

Talk with God about what you're hearing, thinking, wrestling with, and enjoying so far in this study.

Day 3

“I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word” (Ps. 119:16).

Practice the Breath Prayer.

Then read Matthew 10:1-7 and explore these questions:

- What did Jesus do for/with his disciples?
- As you review the names of the disciples, what strikes you about Jesus' followers?
- What does it mean for you to be called, given authority, and sent this week?
- How might God want you to “go and announce” that “the kingdom of God is near” in your neighborhood? What will you do to respond?

Pray for a greater understanding of who you are, as well as who you are called, equipped, and sent to be as a follower of Jesus.

Day 4

“I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word” (Ps. 119:16).

Practice the Breath Prayer.

Then read Matthew 10:8-15 and explore these questions:

- List the do’s and don’ts of Jesus’ instructions. How might they apply to his followers today?
- From whom might God want you to accept hospitality? How?
- To whom might God want you to give your blessing?
- What will you “give as freely as you have received” today?

Sing or say as a prayer the old song “Freely, Freely (God For-gave My Sin),” which is based on this passage (lyrics available at www.audiblefaith.com). Then turn it into your prayer for the day.

Day 5

“I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word” (Ps. 119:16).

Practice the Breath Prayer.

Then read Matthew 10:16-23 and explore these questions:

- When have you felt like a sheep among wolves? How was that feeling related to (or not related to) your faith?
- How might being a Jesus-follower require being like a snake? Like a dove?
- How do you feel about the opportunities God might give you to act like a sheep, snake, or dove?
- What encourages you in this passage?

Pray about your witness and testimony as you go about your daily life this week and as you identify the boundaries of your neighborhood.

Day 6

“I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word” (Ps. 119:16).

Practice the Breath Prayer.

Then read Matthew 10:24-42 and explore these questions:

- How are you like your Teacher and Master? How not?
- What are you most afraid of when it comes to “declaring”?
- How does Jesus address this fear (and others)?
- How do you interpret Jesus’ words in verses 34-39? How do you apply them?
- How do you interpret Jesus’ words in verses 40-42? How do you apply them?
- Imagine that you are one of the first disciples receiving these instructions from Jesus. How do you respond?

Talk to the Lord about what you’ve been hearing.

Pray for one specific way to “acknowledge” Jesus (v. 32) before others today and ask God to give you the courage and the opportunity to do it.

Share your experiences with your group.

Day 7

“I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word” (Ps. 119:16).

Practice the Breath Prayer.

Then read Matthew 28:1-10 and explore these questions:

- What three things are the women told to do?
- Reflect on your own experiences of “coming and seeing” the risen Lord.
- How might we “come and see” the risen Lord today?
- How have you or do you “go quickly and tell”?

- How can you as a group “come and see” and “go and tell” *together* and help others to do the same? Try to think of some specific suggestions. As the angel said, “Do not be afraid.” In other words, *go for it, and quickly!*

At your next group meeting, be prepared to share your “outward” pursuit—your S-A-F-E context (see p. 19)—and what you have been learning and experiencing about your neighborhood throughout the week.

LIFE STORY

As I began to think of myself as a sent one, I began asking myself, “What’s God’s dream for our neighborhood?” This changed everything for me. It set me free and filled me with wonder so that as I walked to the grocery store (which I am doing more often now for this very reason), as I worked in the garden, and as I went in and out in my ordinary way, I was constantly in conversation with God about what he desires for my neighborhood. I imagined all the things that could happen to make us a community . . . street parties, outdoor movie nights (our garage door makes a great screen), gatherings in our family room, games, tea time. It’s wonderful! —LF
