



Who Is My NEIGHBOR?

“And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

–Matthew 22:39

One day when I was home from college, my dad drove me around Brock Park. It was his old neighborhood where he grew up. His house was just a block off the gathering place for, what seemed, every kid in town. He was driving block after block pointing at old houses telling me who lived where. He knew all his friends, with a few enemies thrown in, and their houses.

I was so impressed. He knew probably forty houses for blocks and I didn't even know most of my neighbors. We didn't go play baseball and football at the park. We didn't get chased out after dark. We didn't sit outside drinking Pepsis until midnight. In fact, I had to be in when the streetlights came on. Sure, there were some friends in my edition, but not like my dad's. It was just a “WOW” moment listening to him recollect them with nostalgia.

One story, in particular, really stuck out to me. I was raised with the saying, “TV destroyed our communities.” It always made sense. When people watch tv, they go into their living rooms with their family. Just their families. Separated. It makes sense. But not when you hear my dad's story of their first tv.

My dad told me that they had the first one on the block. That's sounds so strange to me. One tv on a street?! And “new technology”? But they did. I can only imagine what the neighbors thought. “Well, aren't they uppity?!” But here's where the story blew me away. Every evening, they would pull it out on the porch. They used those old extension cords that were brown and sparked all the time, but out would come this thirteen-inch screen and people would bring their lawn chairs and sit and watch a little screen with their neighbors for hours. Isn't that amazing?!

Maybe it wasn't the tv that destroyed neighborhoods. Maybe it was just us. We stopped considering what our neighbors meant to us and what we meant to them. Maybe it became easier to run up to Walmart for a cup of sugar or milk. Maybe life became more about what I want and not what would make our community better. And slowly we forgot we had people that mean so much to us called “neighbors.”

Maybe it's time to go introduce yourself and do what Jesus said. “Love your neighbor as yourself.” We need community, which means we need...neighbors. Our country is a collection of communities of neighbors. Maybe it's not the tv. Maybe it's us. You. Me.

From My Heart,
Billy