


THE SIX PRACTICES OF WHOLE-HEARTED DISCIPLESHIP

THE PRACTICE OF PLACE



COMMUNITY PRACTICE GUIDE



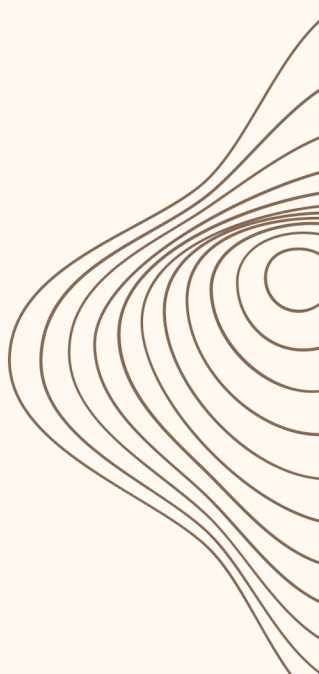
Now when [Jesus] heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee.

And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.


While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.



Matthew 4:12-22

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





PAUSE

Take sixty seconds and pause, silently remembering God's presence with you today.

Pray this prayer of God's people from Psalm 139:

Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me be night,"
even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is bright as the day,
for darkness is as light with you.

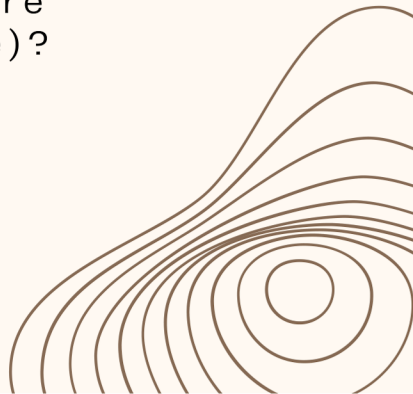
READ & REFLECT

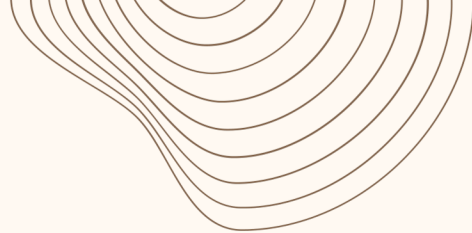
Read Matthew 4:12-22 and John 1:14 twice out loud.

When you're looking for a place to live, what are some of the big things you're looking for?

Looking back at Jesus in Matthew 4, how did Jesus think about where he lived?

Think about where you live. Where is there light (e.g. signs of grace, goodness, life)? Where is there darkness (e.g. pain, confusion, hurt, injustice)?





THE PRACTICE OF PLACE

The Practice of Place means this:

We commit ourselves to loving where we live and to seeking the good of our neighbors and our neighborhood.

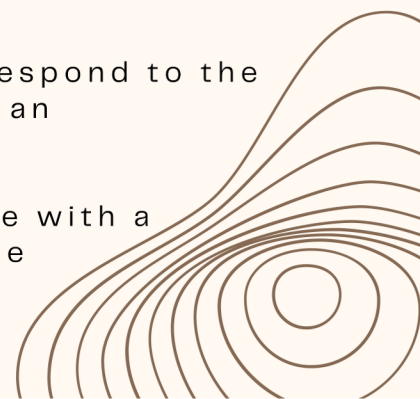
While it's not bad to have a home that's comfortable or live in a convenient location, the shadow side of these values is that they can lead us to build fences to protect our comfort from uncomfortable people and our convenience from inconvenient social or community realities, in the pursuit of our own goals and plans. We might close ourselves off to our neighbors through a literal or metaphorical fence or create systems and structures that keep certain people out of our neighborhoods (e.g. historical practices of redlining and white flight).

Jesus views his place as part of his **calling**. His message, "The kingdom of God has come near," is the gospel in a nutshell: God has come near to us in the person and work of Jesus. His proximity to people allows him to **communicate** this message in a way that people can understand: "I will make you fishers of men" is an invitation that fishermen readily understand. What would the invitation of the gospel sound like to your neighbor?

The practice of place in our rule of life is an invitation to commit to loving where you live. You may not love where you live right now, but your address and your neighborhood are part of your calling. Your home is an outpost in the kingdom of God, bringing light where there is darkness on your street, around your block, or in your neighborhood.

In Matthew 4:22, Jesus' ministry in this place is summarized around four practices that we can begin to implement in our practice of place:

- **Relocation:** Being intentionally present in the community, moving the everyday stuff of life into the community as part of his calling.
- **Conversation:** Engaging in a dialogue with neighbors and the neighborhood. Jesus taught in the synagogue, a meeting place of conversation, discussion, and debate on the important questions of life.
- **Invitation:** Extending an invitation to people to respond to the message of Jesus. Jesus proclaimed the kingdom, an announcement that invited a response.
- **Incarnation:** Meeting the tangible needs of people with a healing touch. Serving and caring for those who he encountered.





ASK

Isaiah 52:7 is God speaking his joy and celebration over those who announce his kingdom:

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace,
who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."


Take a few moments and prayerfully ask God these questions:

How am I prioritizing comfort or convenience
over your calling to be present in the place
you've placed me?

Where do you want me to join you in what
you're already doing here?

YIELD

Each week we will consider a few yielding practices, ways that we can begin to make space in our lives and our habits for Jesus to lead.

- **Relocation:** Relocation doesn't have to mean moving. Instead, how can you be intentional about being present in your local community? Some examples of practices of place could include prayer walking, shopping at local stores, attending local events, or creating a neighborhood map of names and contact information for your immediate block can begin to grow your awareness of your local community.
 - **Conversation:** How can you enter into dialogue with your local community? Joining a local club or organization, hosting or attending a neighborhood block party, Easter egg hunt, or cookout are all ways to enter into conversation with your neighbors and neighborhood. What would this look like for you?
 - **Invitation:** How can you invite people into relationship with you and Jesus? This might start with an invitation to a block party, birthday party, or church. Being a neighbor in Jesus' way leads to an invitation to know Jesus and join his kingdom.
 - **Incarnation:** Meeting a tangible need through acts of service and mercy. How can you care for your neighbor or your neighborhood?
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NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK MAP

In their book "The Art of Neighboring," Jay Pathak and Dan Runyon created a neighborhood map, a way of paying attention to and keeping track of your neighbors to build relationships. For each neighbor, try to learn some basic information about them and ask God, "What do you want me to do, Jesus?"

A: Name and Contact Info

B: Basic Information about them

C: Something deeper you've learned about them



From "The Art of Neighboring," by Jay Pathek and Dan Runyon. Block map available as a resource from www.artofneighboring.com/block-map-2/