



# Experiments In Moving Faith Beyond the Four Walls of a Building.

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**Exercise 2:** Self-guided Neighborhood Tour

**Prep Work Required:** 20 min.

**Cost of Activity:** \$0

**Length of Time:** 30 min. recommended

## MATERIALS

- Printed copies of page 2 and 3 of this exercise (1 copy per person)

## SUMMARY

*In 1 Corinthians 9:19-22, Paul describes his approach to reaching those in his generation. Though he is free to do whatever he pleases, Paul tries to understand different groups of people with the hopes of passing on the message of Christ to each group.*

*He says he became a Jew to the Jews, a man without law to those without law, a weak person to the weak...in summary, "all things to all men."*

*This week, we acknowledge that the way people approach faith may be impacted by their diverse backgrounds. In order to begin to understand the various groups within our communities, we will spend some time walking or driving in local neighborhoods and reflecting on the unique qualities of each portion of our community.*

## INSTRUCTIONS

- ① Print the included Self Guided Tour (pgs. 2-3 of this exercise) and provide each person with one copy to help direct his or her observations as groups walk.
- ② You may choose to have your entire group visit multiple neighborhoods over time, or you may divide the city between groups by assigning one neighborhood to each pair or group of three or four.

③ Encourage people to walk neighborhoods in groups of two or more, to carry a cell phone and to be as minimally invasive as possible. It is preferable to walk in broad daylight. Every neighborhood, including well to do and under-privileged communities, have a mix of friendly, helpful residents and those that perhaps appear unwelcoming. As a rule, it is best for participants to greet those they meet and continue walking down the street. The goal here is to study the neighborhood. In later exercises, there will be more interaction.

That said, God may prompt a group to talk at more length with neighborhood residents. In this case, encourage people to apply common sense. It is usually best not to enter unfamiliar homes, for example.

④ Instruct participants to take notes as they go. However, you might caution them: in situations where neighborhood residents are close by, it will be more disarming if they put the observation paper in their pocket and take notes later, when they are alone. Neighborhood residents could misunderstand why they are taking notes otherwise.

**Optional:** Open the floor, when appropriate, for people to feedback their observations and reflections. Or allow them to share back on an organizational website or social network.

**Please note:** The second exercise is designed to encourage people outside their comfort zones. It may be helpful to break the groups up in such a way that there is a strong leadership-personality in each one who could help lend comfort to those who feel more cautious.

**Other churches/groups are welcome to participate.** Please have them contact Sarah via the links below.

## SHARE & SHOW SOME LOVE



We are developing a resource based on these activities. Please share back your experience to Sarah at [sarahraymondscunningham \(at\) gmail \(dot\) com](mailto:sarahraymondscunningham@gmail.com). Feel free to include pictures.



[www.sarahcunningham.org](http://www.sarahcunningham.org)



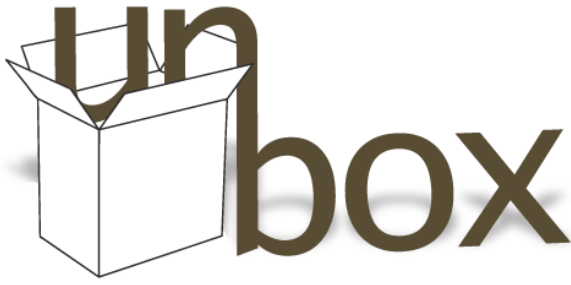
@sarahcunning



Books:  
[\*Dear Church\* \(Zondervan '06\)](#)  
[\*Picking Dandelions\* \(Zondervan '10\)](#)



sarahraymondscunningham



# GUIDED NEIGHBORHOOD TOURS

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## DIRECTIONS

As you walk around the community, try to observe the unique qualities of each neighborhood. Do some neighborhoods have basketball hoops in nearly every driveway, while others have an abundance of bird feeders, for example? And what might these differences reflect? For instance, a neighborhood with sporting equipment is probably home to families with children, while a neighborhood with bird feeders might be home to nature enthusiasts or the elderly.

The items below are examples of features you might look for, which could help you think carefully about the lives of the residents who live there.

- Number of city-installed public trash receptacles
- Condition of roads and sidewalks
- Number of “no-trespassing” or “beware of dogs” signs
- Condition of parks
- Number and condition of street lights
- Number of vacant buildings or lots
- Number of houses for sale
- Types of advertisements displayed
- Alcohol or drug paraphernalia
- Amount of wildlife present
- Presence of pleasing or unpleasing smells
- Presence of pleasing or unpleasing sights
- Number of cars passing through or in driveways/garages
- Type of residences: I.e. Apartments vs. Residences vs. Condos vs. Government Housing vs. Trailers
- Presence of security systems
- Number of broken windows
- Presence of litter
- Number of pedestrians
- Number of bus stops or subway stations
- Condition of sewers/drainage systems
- Presence of languages other than English (in speech or writing)
- Presence of graffiti
- Closeness to grocery, post office, bank, drug store, library, churches, restaurant, public offices, police and fire etc.
- Number of trees/amount of green space
- Number of fences/physical boundaries

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- ➊ Based on what you observed, do you think that residents of some neighborhoods are experiencing a better quality of life than residents of other neighborhoods? For example, would residents of some neighborhoods feel safer than residents of others? Were some more visually appealing than others? How might people's impressions of the city and society be impacted by where they live?
- ➋ Did every neighborhood seem to enhance the life of its residents? Did all the neighborhoods present the same opportunity for self-sufficiency? For example, were basic goods and services within walking distance or were these establishments easily accessible via car or bus route?

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- **BROKEN WINDOW THEORY:** Social scientists James Wilson and George Kelling developed a theory about neighborhoods known as the "Broken Window Theory". They suggest that if broken windows or other signs of vandalism are not repaired, that vandals will be more likely to target the area. As the physical appeal of the area breaks down, people take less pride in it and in turn, protect and maintain it less. They believe that one part of reducing crime is to improve the appearance of the neighborhood. Do you agree or disagree?
- **ADEQUATE LIGHTING THEORY:** The Gray Street Lights Project in Workington, West Cumbria (U.K.), noticed that the residents of Gray Street's 90 homes were often targeted by thieves who broke into their cars. During 2002, 27 automobiles were broken into, costing the residents about \$9,000. In 2003, the police raised \$24,500 in public lighting money to install many more lights onto the street. In 2004, only six car thefts were reported. Do you believe that lighting impacts crime in neighborhoods? Why do you think that some neighborhoods have many more un-replaced, broken street lights than others?
- **GRAFFITI THEORY:** A study published in the journal *Science* suggested that the presence of graffiti doubles the amount of littering and stealing in a neighborhood. In New York, during a "Quality of Life" campaign run in the 1990s, graffiti, litter and vandalism were removed and petty crime rates dropped.
- **OPPORTUNITY REDUCTION THEORY:** This theory seeks to identify social problems that may be linked to higher levels of crime (Podolefsky and Dubow, 1981) and to improve these issues by starting youth programs, drug programs, tutoring etc. (Bennett and Lavrakas, 1988)
- **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH STATISTICS:** One study by Garofalo and McLeod (1988) found that most Neighborhood Watch programs exist in neighborhoods with single-family homes, few commercial buildings and long-term residents. Why would some neighborhoods be more likely to begin a Neighborhood Watch program than others (even those who need it more)?

## LEARN MORE

If you go to <http://www.neighborhoodscout.com> and type in your zip code, the site will allow you to compare income, crime and other statistics for different neighborhoods in your community.