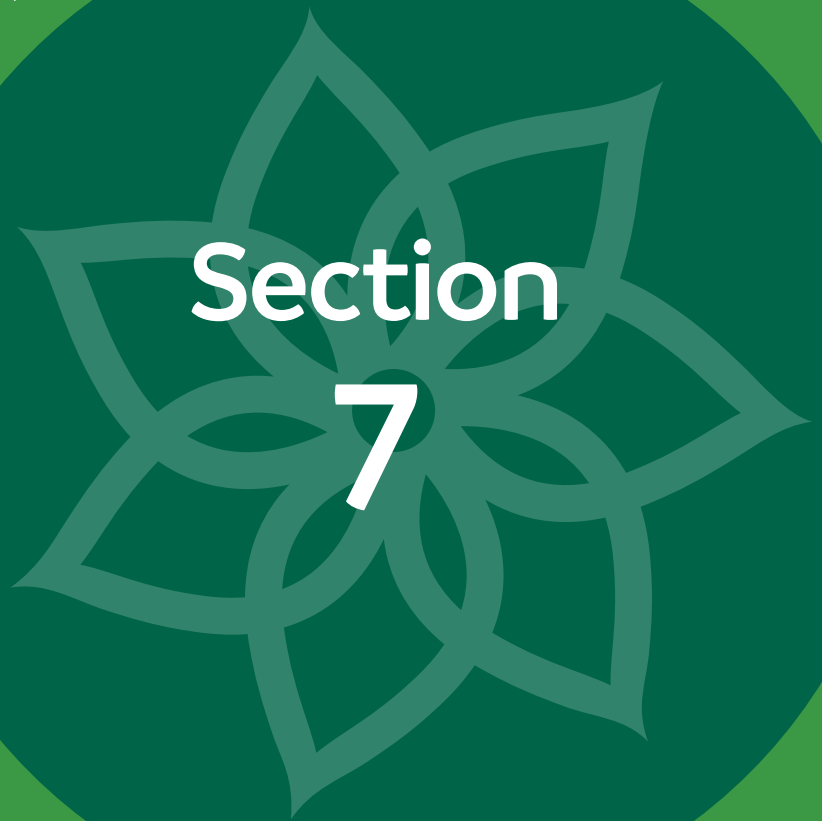


Neighborhood Exegesis
For Presbyteries and Churches

Vital Congregations

Section

7



Neighborhood Analysis

1. Lead *Dwelling in the Word* on Luke 10:1–11
(see below)

2. Introduce the idea of a neighborhood visit.
Emphasize that the goal is to get to know more about the neighborhood and its people. We do this by using all five senses. We are not going out to teach anything, to convert anyone, or to change the neighborhood, just to learn from the people who know more about it that we do.

3. Ask participants if they have any ideas how they can learn about the neighborhood. They will probably mention looking at the houses and businesses, observing what kind of services are available, listening to what languages are spoken, talking to people, etc. Press them to come up with as many ideas as possible by asking, “what else?”

4. Explain parameters:

- They will be going out two by two just as Jesus sent the disciples (three is OK if you have an uneven number)
- What time they need to return
- Pray with your partner before leaving the building—that you will find the right people to talk to, that you will be observant and respectful.

5. Give these three assignments:

- Buy something to eat or drink (I often send them out over lunch and ask them to buy their lunch in the community)
- Talk to at least one person
- Bring back a token, something that represents what you learned about the people you met.

6. Give the list of things to look for.

Dwelling in the Word

Luke 10:1–11

After this the Lord appointed seventy^{1a} others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ ⁶And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹ cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’^{1b} ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹“Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’

Reflect:

- Listen to the passage.
- Underline any words or phrases that stand out.
- Sit quietly with those words.
- What message do you hear?
- Share with another person.

Debrief:



Notes:

- Who do you see? Describe the people.
- What are they doing?
- What conversations do you observe?
- Are people alone or in groups?
- Do you see people walking on the streets? Driving? Sitting? Biking?
- How are the people dressed? Pay attention to details such as shoes, jewelry, hair and clothing styles.
- What do you hear and smell?
- Pay attention to the town infrastructure: sidewalks, streetlights, stop lights, signage. What do they tell you about the community?
- Describe the houses you see: single family, apartments, condos? Are they well cared for? Do you see toys in the yards? Cars parked out front? What can you tell about the community?
- What kind of signage do you see? Advertising? Fliers on telephone poles?
- What is your overall impression of the community?
- Is there anything that you might expect to see in a community that seems to be missing?
- Describe the commercial district: what stores do you see? What stores are not present? What signs of commercial vibrancy do you see?
- What businesses do you observe? Can you get a sense of what people in this community do for a living?
- Where are the children? Is there a school in the community? What signs of children or youth activities do you notice?
- What leisure activities can you observe? Is there a gym, movie theater, sports facility, etc.
- What churches or other community gathering places do you observe?