

LISTENING FOR GOD IN OUR COMMUNITY

It is important to go out into the neighborhood/community to listen and to learn from others. We want to observe, connect, and lay the foundation for building a relationship with our neighbors. Prepare yourself with prayer and a willing heart. Go with an open mind to receive what God may bring your way, and to be surprised as to what is happening around you. **The reason we go out to listen to our neighbors is to avoid the mistake of thinking we know already what this community needs.** The life and presence of your community is to help you shape your ministry vision and goals.

1. COMMUNITY VISITS (visiting ORGANIZATIONS and LEADERS):

- A. Select from a list of schools and universities, City and County agencies, Social Service organizations, and businesses to visit in your area. (Habitat for Humanity, United Way, Salvation Army, food shelves, police chief, city manager, funeral homes, etc.) In most cases, call ahead and explain what you are doing, that you are coming to ask them what they think about this community. Give them three questions: (1) what are the strengths of this community, (2) what are some issues that need to be addressed, and (3) how might our congregation be a part of meeting these needs?
- B. Be brief and to the point in your visit. Tell them "Thank you for what you do for our community". Tell them up front that you are taking notes of general themes of what they say but you will not use their names.
Before you leave ask them if they any questions for you.

2. NEIGHBORHOOD CALLING (visiting INDIVIDUALS and HOMES):

- A. *First thought: go with a positive frame of mind that you might meet someone new and that you may learn something new about this neighborhood.* Use name tags and have some literature (Sunday bulletin or newsletter) to leave with them, if they want it. As you approach the house, notice your surroundings.
- B. Smile, introduce yourself, say you are from BLC and that you have come by today to say 'hello'. Where the conversation goes from there is open ended. If possible, mention that BLC is wanting to hear what the needs are of this neighborhood, and since BLC is part of this neighborhood, we want to do our part to help meet these needs. Assure them that you will not use their names or addresses. Thank them for their time to visit with you.
- C. Be kind and gentle. If they are not interested, smile and say "thank you" and move on.