



50 ways

TO INITIATE
great
CONNECTIONS
with OTHERS



1.

ASK GOD to show you how you can add to your community of friends.

2.

Call or connect with at least one person in your church and ask how you can pray for him/her. Pray with him/her on the phone or in person.

3.

Make a list of people who might be good additions to your community of friends. Include people from your church, workplace, and neighborhood or area. Pray for each of them—not only that they might become your friend, but also that God would bless them.

4.

Invite some people over for a simple meal. Enjoy one another's company for the evening. Share prayer requests and pray for one another. Maybe even schedule another night to get together and follow up on the prayer requests.

5.

Ask your friends if they have friends or acquaintances with whom you might connect well. These adjacent friends may be wonderful new friends.

6.

Revisit your friend list. Is there anyone on that list you are guilty of judging? If so, consider how your judgment might be a stumbling block to that person, or an obstacle in developing a deeper, more meaningful relationship with that person.

7.

Make a list of people you know who are hurting. Pick at least one name on the list and brainstorm a creative way to encourage him/her. Give up an activity this week to make time for connecting with him/her.

8.

Biblical community is made up of imperfect people with imperfect problems. If we are to forge true friendships—those built on Jesus and His love for us—we must be willing to encourage others, even those with whom we do not agree. **Identify two people you can encourage this week, including someone with whom you do not agree.**

9.

When there is conflict—and there will always be conflict in authentic relationships—we must be willing to pray for, support, and build up the other. Pray for someone with whom you are in conflict or have been in conflict in the past.

10.

Contact your church office to find the contact information for some shut ins in your area. Write each one a card, reminding them that they are loved and valuable. Let them know that they are not alone.

11.

Write a letter to a friend, thanking them for the friendship you share and encouraging them to keep up the good work!

12.

Think of someone that might need some encouragement. Perhaps a person you have not seen at church lately could use some encouragement to return, or someone who is hesitant to use her gifting might benefit from your support and accountability.

13.

Make a list of people you find yourself judging. Pray for them by name out loud and ask for forgiveness.

14.

Spend concerted time in public and not on your phone. Make new connections at coffee shops, hair salons, restaurants, in line at the grocery store, etc. instead of always eating lunch at your desk.

15.

Be a humble person. Humility takes many forms. For some, it is serving behind the scenes. For others, it is giving up a night to babysit for a family with foster kids so that they can get some time to reconnect. For others, it is really listening and investing in the life of another. It also can look like relinquishing control to God when He calls us to do something brave. Ask yourself: what is one way God is calling you to show humility in community with others?

16.

Ask your pastor or women's ministry/Bible study leader if there is someone in the church who needs some hospitality in Jesus' name. Keep it simple and make a new friend.

17.

Are you aware of a missionary family who could use some encouragement? Call or send a card or package to encourage them. Be hospitable, even if they are halfway around the world. Encourage others to do the same.

18.

Sign up to bring a meal for a new foster family, a community member who just returned home from the hospital, missionaries on furlough, and/or a recent widow and take hospitality to them.

19.

Strike up "mini conversations" with people in your everyday life. Strike up conversation with the grocery clerk, UPS driver, receptionist at the doctor's office, etc. Practicing mini conversations may make deeper conversations less awkward.

20.

Hospitality is not limited to opening one's door or home to others; it includes connecting with others and with God. In fact, that connection is interrelated. What can you do to strengthen your connection with God? Make a plan and see how it affects your relationships with others also.

21.

I burn a candle at my house when guests are coming. I want my house to smell welcoming (actually, I want it to smell like I can bake cookies without burning them!). I want each person to feel valued and special in my home. What is a simple way you can make others feel valued and special in your home? Try something new this week.

22.

Find groups of folks who share your interest via Facebook groups, community calendars, political meetings, Meetup app, etc. Even if you do not make connections the first time, commit to numerous meetings to increase the chances of connecting with a new friend or two.

23.

Open your home and heart (and candles!) to others and, in turn, honor God. It means leveraging the things God has given us to bring others closer to Him. Identify something God has given to you that you can leverage to bring others closer to Him.

24.

It may be fun to “spill the tea,” hear “the juice,” and talk about people, but that is not true loving connection or friendship and it is not honoring to God. In fact, it is destructive to the Body of Christ and reflects poorly on everyone who participates. If someone has shared information with us, it is our job to protect that information and be a safe harbor for that person. Remember that gossip undermines hospitality and biblical community, and the ability to be a safe person who keeps confidences. Be extra sensitive this week to detect when catching up becomes gossip, and redirect the conversation.

25.

Make a list of things from the past week for which you need to ask forgiveness from Jesus. Spend some time in prayer confessing these things and thanking Him for His forgiveness.

26.

Explore the town or city in which you live. Serve in a philanthropic organization there.

27.

Pray for healing in your church and community. Ask Him to show you new ways to “love one another” and set an example for others.

28.

Gather with a group of other believers. Pray that God would show you how to best love those around you. You might want to take communion together or wash each other’s feet. You might want to exchange names and commit to pray for one another this week. You might want to join together to serve in some way. Ask the Lord to guide you into deeper community as you spend time together.

29.

Pray for those in your community whose views and positions are different from yours.

30.

Plan a get together for your co-workers to get to know them better out of the office.

31.

As the Lord leads, reach out to someone in your community who has had a public failure or made mistakes and ask how you can encourage and support him or her.

32.

Sign up for a continuing education class.

33.

For the next day or so, with every interaction you have with another person, whether they are a believer or not, work hard to establish something on which you can both agree. Practice unity – it is a major part of commUNITY.

34.

Organize a supper club in your area of couples and/or singles.

35.

Continue to work on extending forgiveness to someone who may have wronged you. Pray about what next steps you need to take, and ask God to guide and strengthen you as you act.

36.

Sometimes, we connect better with others when we are better connected to who we are. Take a day, or a few hours, and unplug from your world as much as possible.

37.

Spend time reading God's Word and listening to God. Find a quiet place, go for a walk, or listen to some praise music. However you choose to do it, make intentional space for talking with God.

38.

As you spend time with the Lord, ask if there is anyone who needs you to show up and just let them be where they are in their circumstance. Purposefully put aside your own agenda and what you think he or she may need, and instead pray for guidance about how best to love and support that person.

39.

Tell your pastor, clergy, or mentors how much you appreciate them serving your community and acknowledge that they have a tough job to do. Pray for them as they navigate the ups and downs of their own lives.

40.

Do one small thing today to encourage another believer.



41.

Connect with others at the gym, on public transport, in a book club, dog park, at a museum, whilst hiking, at a cultural event, protests, sporting events, or in a bookstore.

42.

If you are not part of a church, commit to spending time to find a body in which you can grow in your knowledge of God's Word, stretch your faith muscles, and be built up by other believers.

43.

If God leads you to do so, consider encouraging someone you know who has left the church with a text, call, email, or letter.

44.

Develop a habit of gratitude through daily practice—perhaps by writing down all the things you are thankful for each day, speaking them aloud in prayer, or finding another way to express your thanks to God.

45.

Thank the people in your life who spur you on and encourage you to grow. Let them know how God has blessed you because of them.

46.

Create a list of questions to ask new acquaintances like: What do you love most about your job? What do you find the most challenging? How long have you lived in the area? What do they enjoy most about living here?

47.

Pray about where God is calling you to serve others, and when He answers you, move forward with that call, even if you only take a small step. You might even want to tell a trusted friend about where you feel led in order to have some encouragement and accountability.

48.

If applicable to your situation, join an anonymous group. We are all broken and often great connections come from vulnerability and shared experiences.

49.

Make a list of people you know would benefit from some celebrations (couldn't we all?). Schedule some opportunities to celebrate the victories of others with a phone call, a high five, a meal, or a coffee and a donut (unless they are Paleo, then get some of those Paleo ones, too).

50.

If you haven't already, identify your God-given strengths, and pray that God would reveal to you the best ways to celebrate those strengths and use them in service for others.



• *about* AMBERLY

Amberly Neese is a speaker and comedian for two popular national tours, Aspire Women's Events and Marriage Date Night. In addition, she is an author for Abingdon Press; her latest Bible study, "The Belonging Project" releases in May 2020.

With a Master's Degree from Biola University, she serves as an adjunct professor at Grand Canyon University and as the Director of Development at UCYC (United Christian Youth Camp). Amberly and her husband, Scott have two teenagers and live in Prescott, Arizona, where they enjoy the great outdoors, the Food Network, and all things Star Wars.