

Prayer Leads to Love

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

My six-year-old grandson Jack cracks me up! Recently my daughter (his mom) doodled some plans in pencil for a house they are thinking of building. When she finished, she set the plans and the pencil on the coffee table and walked away to do something else. When she came back later, she was amused to find that Jack had erased the name of his sister on her room, and had substituted the name of his “girlfriend” Natalie. When asked why, he quipped, “I love Natalie and want to play with her all the time.”

Apparently, he only had so much capacity to love, and since there weren't enough rooms, his sister had to go. In a way, I am like that. I think a lot of us are. I love my family, several friends, and, in some capacity, I certainly love my fellow believers because the Bible says I am supposed to. But I am not sure how much capacity I have to love beyond that.

Lesson Learned

Several years ago, I learned about the power of prayer and its connection to love. My wife and I had just moved into a home we had built—the second house completed in a new neighborhood. When we moved in, the 15 homes under construction indicated we soon would have neighbors.

We had just learned about the Prayer-Care-Share formula of first praying for neighbors, then looking for ways to show the love of Christ to them, and finally getting the opportunity to share Jesus with them. I decided to try it with new neighbors. My wife and I would greet new neighbors when they moved in and learn their names. I started praying for them.

What I found was that as I prayed by name for them, a natural

desire to get to know them started to form within me! God was giving me His heart for them and a capacity to love them.

I suspect that is why Jesus said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt. 5:44). He knows that if we start praying, He will fill us with this love!

Our nation seems filled with hatred fueled by social media, the news media, and politics. Sadly, many believers are also caught up in it. Yet we are instructed—commanded—to love.

How do we love? By praying for people with whom we disagree (including those who post things on Facebook that drive us up a wall). And by praying for ourselves and our fellow believers, that we would put on love.

When we pray, Jesus will make more room in our hearts and fill us with His love.

—Jonathan Graf is the publisher of *Prayer Connect*.

A Resource to Help

If you want encouragement to pray for neighbors, below is a great 30-day prayer guide that can help you.