



The Value of Margin by Kara Noetzel

This article was first written for our [Mosaic NWA blog](#). Check it often for teaching follow-ups and new articles on a variety of topics, all written by Mosaic folks.

When we moved into our house four years ago, as first-time homeowners, I had big dreams about neighborhood ministry. I envisioned block parties, where the 30+ families who live on our street would congregate for food, music, and an inflatable bounce house. I had plans to beautify the neighborhood, to rally neighbors to pick up the trash that collects in the gutters, plant flowers in each other's front yards, and repair the broken 70's era lampposts that adorn our driveways. I thought I could love people by helping them with basic home repairs (though I have no expertise with this type of thing). I dreamed I would plant a big garden that would thrive so abundantly that I would have no choice but to share the bounty with our neighbors. I imagined myself leaving homemade treats on each doorstep at Christmas time, with extra for the mailman and garbage collectors. Of course, there was also the occasional borrowing of a cup of sugar.

Apart from the sugar, none of these things have happened. Our lampposts are still broken and trash still collects in the drainage ditch. I've never given anything to our mailman. Real life ministry looks so different than my dreams. I have often been surprised when I find myself receiving, rather than giving, love and service. I have received gifts of espresso, homemade honey, imported cheese, and garden plants. We have been advised on our own home-repair projects. Our babies have been held and our kids invited to birthday parties. I have made friends with-and have been befriended by-my neighbors.

What's Happening?

MAY/JUNE:

High School Senior Banquet

May 10 | 6:30-8:30pm
Email [Janie](#) for more info

**Samaritan Community
Center food Drive**

May 13 | Last day for donations
Worship Center Foyer

Annual Baptism Service

May 27 | 5:00pm
One service only, no kids' classes
Email Gretchen by May 15 if
interested in baptism.

Parent/Child Dedication

June 3 | 5:00 and 6:45pm
Email Susan by May 12 if
interested in participating.

NextGen45

June 3 | 5:00 and 6:45pm
*Students 4th grade and up worship
with their parents.*

Grade Promotion

June 10 | 5:00 and 6:45pm
*All children, toddler to middle
school promote to next
class/grade.*

Swim Night

June 21 | 7:15-9:15pm
Rogers Aquatic Center
\$5/person, \$20 max/family

*For more information on any of
the events above, email
mosaic@fellowshipnwa.org*

These friendships have happened as a result of margin. In a document, the margin is the white space that surrounds the content of the page. In our busy and information-overloaded culture, I am inclined to fill every inch of the "pages" of my days. If I'm not careful, from the moment I wake up to the moment I go to sleep, my eyes are locked on my next appointment or task, and in between, on my phone. My life is scheduled and full; I complain about "not having the time" to do the things I want to do. Creating margin means slowing down and leaving some time unplanned.

This looks like lingering in the front yard to chat with a neighbor instead of rushing to my next event. It looks like exercising outside, without headphones. It looks like choosing to play outside with my kids even when my house is a mess and I'd really like to get a jump-start on dinner. It looks like inviting people into my home, and, when invited, going into theirs. It looks like lifting my eyes up off of my plans, and asking God to show me the people he wants me to talk to.

I don't know that I will ever throw a block party with an inflatable. But I am confident that if we, as the body of Christ, work to create margin in our lives, God will be faithful to fill it with His purposes, *"for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure"* ([Philippians 2:13](#)).

Starting this Saturday, May 13, we are starting a two-week series on "The Art of Neighboring". Join us as we look at what it looks like to take another step in loving our neighbors where we work, live, and play. Wherever you are, start with the next step. That's all it takes.

RESOURCES

- [Art of Neighboring](#)
- [Gospel in Your Neighborhood](#)
- [Gospel In Your Neighborhood](#) - Video series (Including an episode on [Your Children are Instruments!](#))
- [Get Involved in Your Neighborhood](#)

