



Reflective prayer walk

By going out and walking the streets in which we live, we can become more aware of the people and the issues that surround us.

Prayer walking is about purposefully walking and talking with God, hearing and heeding His voice, seeing and sensing as He does, loving our neighbours and lifting them up in prayer, asking God to bring blessing, healing and salvation to our community.

GUIDANCE FOR REFLECTIVE PRAYER WALKING:

- Keep it simple! There is no set pattern or formula.
- You can go alone but you might want to go out in twos and threes.
- After your walk, come back and share with others what you have discovered.

BEFORE:

- Choose an area that you feel comfortable walking around and plan your route.
- Prepare yourselves before you go out so that you feel comfortable with each other. Share your hopes and anxieties.
- Pray together before you go out and ask God to guide you.
- Ask to see the area with God's eyes, that you might sense what is good and pleasing in his sight as well as what things grieve him deeply.
- Look through the Community Observation Guide before you begin the Prayer Walk, so that you are familiar with the sorts of things it encourages you to look out for.

DURING:

- Take some time to feel comfortable and do not take risks!
- Take the Community Observation Guide with you and refer to it from time to time.
- You can decide to pray silently as you walk, or you might like to pray out loud with your colleagues, in which case you might like to look as if you are having a conversation together.
- Pray for families, schools, churches, police and hospitals - whatever you find in your area.
- Linger at specific sites which seem to be key.
- Pray for the people you see. Smile, be friendly.
- Pray about any local issues you know about.
- Pray for people responsible in any position of authority – for teachers, police, local politicians and parents.
- Pray for church leaders and congregations in other churches that you pass.
- Pray for God's blessing on the houses you walk past.



Reflective prayer walk (continued)

AFTER:

Share with others what you have experienced and prayed. Share your insights. It will encourage others – as well as yourself. Think about going at different times and in different weathers to reflect on how the area changes.

Community observation guide

As you walk prayerfully around your neighbourhood, you might find it helpful to look out for some of the following things to help you think more deeply about life in the neighbourhood, asking God to help you see it with fresh eyes.

People groups: Who is standing at bus stops, hanging about on street corners, going into businesses, playing in the park, doing their shopping? Note ages, ethnicities, languages, and apparent economic status. How much do you see people interacting with one another?

Places of activity: Shops, busy main roads, playgrounds, schools, gathering places for young people.

Structures: What are the types and conditions of the buildings (homes, businesses, roads, parks)? How much open space is there in the community?

Services: Where can people go to shop, eat out, get an education, worship, and receive assistance? What appears to be the quantity and quality of available services? Who is providing services, and who is receiving them?

Signs of change: Note which businesses are opening or closing, and if housing is under construction, for sale, or being demolished. Check for languages added to shop signs, and buildings used in ways different from their original purpose. Overall, do conditions appear to be getting better or worse?

Signs of hope: Where is there evidence of God's grace and God's people at work? Look for playing children, uplifting artwork, voluntary organisations, social gatherings, and gardens. Look especially for local assets that could be connected with neighbourhood needs.

Signs of faith: Look out for churches and places of worship. What is hopeful about church(es) in this neighbourhood? How might our neighbours of other faiths be partners in bringing positive change in this community?

Signs of need: Look for evidence of hardship, hurt or injustice. Is what you see specific to particular areas or affecting the neighbourhood as a whole? Be aware that marginalised people and social problems are often hidden, especially in communities that appear well-off.