

Prayer Walking

This is a resource recommended by the Revd Tim Yau, Mission Enabler for the Diocese of Norwich. Tim says, “Stepping out and praying for your community as you walk is a great way to get started for missional listening”.

Who?

Prayer walking can be done by an individual who is interested in and cares for a place and its people. It can also be done by a small group of people from the same church, or representatives from different churches from the same area, acting as a sign of unity and cooperation. Likewise, prayer walking could be done by a whole congregation, which acts as an obvious sign that local Christians are present, interested in, and caring for the local community.

What?

Prayer walking is stepping out and praying for your community as you walk. It simply involves walking around a place, praying for the spaces, businesses, public services, homes and people you see around you. You may plan to stop at specific locations, or you may just walk and see where the Holy Spirit leads you.

When?

You can prayer walk at any time but make it a time when you can be attentive to God’s presence in the places you walk, seeing God’s heart for the people around you and listening to the Holy Spirit’s lead.

Where?

Be strategic. Choose a location that you care about or that is in your care. It could simply be your street, or your neighbourhood, but you could prayer-walk your whole parish or benefice. Start small and build as you grow into this spiritual practice.

Why?

God told Joshua: ‘I will give you every place where you set your foot’ (Joshua 1:3). There is something powerful and significant about making our prayers physical. Being prayerfully present in a place is a symbol and sign that God is present.

How?

There is no one way to prayer-walk. However, the following can guide your prayer:

- **Observation:** What do you see? For example, if you see children's toys in a garden, you might be prompted to pray for the neighbourhood's children, for families or for schools.
- **Research:** What do you know? If you've read up about the area, you might know something about the people who live there, or if the area suffers from crime or injustice. Pray about these things and invite God to act.
- **Revelation:** The Holy Spirit may nudge your heart or bring an idea to mind for a particular need or area of prayer. Listen - and pray!
- **Scripture:** You may have read part of the Bible in preparation for your walk or as you walk, the Holy Spirit may bring a Scripture to mind. Pray about that passage and how it might impact the people in that area.
- **The WALK acronym contains four simple steps:**
 - W WORSHIP:** Make sure your eyes are set on Jesus as you start to walk. Use resources from your own tradition, such as singing or silence, to encourage you.
 - A ASK:** Flowing from your worship, ask that God's Spirit may fall on the streets you walk on, the homes, businesses, schools and other churches you walk past. Home in on specific situations and people, especially those who are opening doors of opportunity for the gospel within your community.
 - L LISTEN:** As you pray, make sure you also give space to listening so that God can guide your prayers. If you are prayer-walking in a group, listen to one another's prayers – you'll find that you spark off each other's ideas.
 - K KNOW your area:** Keep informed about the area where you are prayer-walking. Find out about its history so you can pray for the resolution of any on-going problems or pray that its gifts and graces might spill out to surrounding areas.
- **Finishing the prayer walk**

If you're praying in a group it's helpful to debrief after a prayer walk and to share what you've learnt. So agree a rendezvous and give everyone in the group the opportunity to share, praying for one another before you go your separate ways.
- **Making it more than a one-off**

Once you've completed the walk, encourage those present to make a habit of walking and blessing the places where they live and work. You might adopt a street or an area and walk it regularly week after week and so continue to speak God's light, life and love into it.