

Go Pray!



PRAYER WALKING YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Scripture

Revelation 21:3–5 (The Message)

I heard a voice thunder from the Throne: “Look! Look! God has moved into the neighbourhood, making his home with men and women! They’re his people, he’s their God. He’ll wipe every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good—tears gone, crying gone, pain gone—all the first order of things gone.” The Enthroned continued, “Look! I’m making everything new. Write it all down—each word dependable and accurate.”

Matthew 10:5–8 (The Message)

Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge: “Don’t begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don’t try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighbourhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.

INTRODUCTION

‘Go out in the neighbourhood (mobilise), pray and make connections’, General Andre Cox

Through ‘The Whole World Mobilising’, General Andre Cox emphasises that the Army’s ‘Twofold mission is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus and to meet human needs’. He reminds us that, ‘God has placed us in community and we can’t wait for people to come to us, we need to get out and reach them’. Or in the words of William Booth to his son Bramwell, ‘Do something!’

Prayer is a foundational mission tool. Through time with the Lord, we come into alignment with his heart for our neighbours and the wider community. Praying as we walk through our neighbourhoods gives God opportunity also to direct our observations.

THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER WALKING OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

Is to prepare the environment for spiritual receptivity as well as to spread blessing. John Wesley talks of the pro-active move of the Spirit (prevenient grace), going before us and preparing a way for us to make inroads into the neighbourhood. The heart of these inroads is to bring people into relationship with the Lord. God’s grace goes before, stirring hearts to recognise the need for something more—that something is missing and incomplete in lives. The Spirit stirs up a desire to know God and we partner with the Lord, praying in the Spirit and making ourselves available to be used by him.

CONSIDER THE BIGGER PICTURE AS YOU PREPARE

Dream, imagine BIG and ask the Lord to place in your heart what he wants for his people. Envisage what you want your community to become. Pray that into being.

Acknowledge the work of the Lord’s prevenient grace before you walk and seek him to begin influencing the area. Ask the Lord to soften the hearts of all residents and businesses to him and to open hearts, ears and eyes to the movement of the Spirit.

Ask the Holy Spirit to roam the neighbourhood and to visit every house and make you aware of the spiritual needs of households—pray about the subject of the prompting as you walk.

Maybe like Bill Johnson, a revivalist, itinerant speaker, author and senior pastor of Bethel Church in Redding, California, you want your area to be a cancer free zone. Or perhaps your area is lower socio-economic with high unemployment and you want it productive, purposeful providing the means for employment—pray it into being.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO RELEASE IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

Begin by releasing the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) over the neighbourhood—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Perhaps release the values that you would like to see exhibited throughout the neighbourhood such as: integrity, compassion, respect, collaboration, dignity, wisdom, unity, tolerance, honesty, generosity, forgiveness etc.

Release the sense of ‘true community’ over the neighbourhood—ask the Lord to raise everyone’s awareness regarding the need to really get to know their neighbours, to care about them, to invest in a continual relationship between them and helping meet their needs as they arise.

Pray for the release of a justice heart within the community, from doubt that change is possible, and for the activation of anything required for each person to step into a positive interactive relationship with their neighbourhood.

Then consider what is necessary for each resident’s material, economic, social, physical, psychological, financial health and bless your community in these areas. Blessing releases the qualities of the thing prayed for.

Become aware of how you feel as you pass each home. Do you sense fear, isolation, domestic violence, hunger, loneliness, sadness, grief, immorality, bullying, despair, then ask the Lord to release what is necessary to work against that negative.

Community ‘wholeness’ is the ultimate goal of your prayer walk. Wholeness can be achieved in all of the areas mentioned previously, but complete wholeness can only be achieved when a person is in relationship with the Lord.

INSPIRATION FOR DIRECTING PRAYER TOPICS

To get ideas and prayer focus subjects about your community, go to your council website. There are a variety of headings, such as ‘about our city’, population or demographic profiles, population forecast, social atlas, community well-being reports, under which you will find information about who lives in your neighbourhood, their economic, social, educational, health situations and the coming changes in these areas over the next 30 years. Does your area have many single parents, aged pensioners or new immigrants

who have English as a second language? What needs might people have? What prayers might benefit them as you walk around?

Read your local paper and use the article subjects to inform the subject of your prayers. Are there regular reports of crime, community projects and individuals etc? What might these say about the basic needs of the people or the community? Pray over the newspaper articles and ask the Lord to direct your prayers accordingly.

Visit your local police station and welfare agencies, and ask what the main concerns are in your neighbourhood. Consider how your prayers might be formed to change the contributing factors to the problems.

PLAN YOUR WALKS—THINGS TO CONSIDER

Whether this is a one off prayer walk or the beginning of a regular prayer activity, why not claim the area for the Lord just as Joshua did in Jericho (Joshua 6:1-17)? Why not drive around the total area you are claiming for the Lord seven times, as a symbolic act of faith.

THEN PLAN YOUR WALK.

If this is to become a regular activity, then you may want to get a map of the entire area and break it down into appropriate walks of certain distance and time that you will do over time to cover the entire area.