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Spiritual Disciplines: Prayer

Prayer Walking

Prayerwalking is simply praying in the very places we expect God to bring forth His answers.

What is Prayerwalking?

Prayerwalking is praying on-site with insight. It is more than enjoying personal communion with God while walking. Prayerwalking is focused intercession. As desirable as outdoor devotions may be, the term “prayerwalking” should be reserved for on-site prayers for others.

Prayerwalking is intentional prayer. The value of physical exercise is merely a side benefit to the main focus of intercessory prayer for those in your prayerwalking area. Walk in order to pray instead of merely adding prayer to a regimen of walking.

Prayerwalking is strolling through neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces, praying as we go. There are some occasions when the prayer should be demonstrative, but usually it’s being on the scene without making a scene. Though they usually walk unnoticed, prayerwalkers quickly become aware of the realities and needs of their neighbors.

Prayerwalking is not ‘magic.’ The power to effect change within our cities through prayer comes via the personal and corporate commitment to live in such a manner that our lives are the vehicles through which God can work.

Instructions for Prayerwalking:

- Seek to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as you pray.
- Pray with your spiritual eyes open. As you walk down a street, ask that God would help you see the neighborhood from His perspective. Pray specifically for people you see and things you pass. This is called praying on-site with insight.
- Keep your prayers centered on blessing and binding. Seek to bless every block, homes, and business as you pray for their well being. The greatest blessing is that individuals come to know the hope and life that Jesus offers. We will seek to bring the enemy’s activity over these neighborhoods as we take authority in Jesus’ name and take a stand against the enemy’s schemes. Always remember: *we bless people and we bind the evil spirits.*
- Pray over any houses that are for sale or empty that God may fill them with his righteous individuals or people that are spiritually hungry.
- Pray for bars or liquor stores if nearby . . . bind the spirits that would seek to entrap people. Seek opportunities to pray over the owners, managers, and leaders, asking the Lord to bless them with spiritual revelation. Many of these individuals do not have much contact with Christians, much less with Christians that are seeking to bless them.
- Pray for Christians that may already live in the area that their witness will be strong and their love will be evident to their neighbors.
- Pray over any church you may walk by. If they are a church that teaches the Gospel, pray that they would grow and impact their community. If they do not preach the Gospel, then pray that the church leaders would come to the saving knowledge of Christ.

Prayerwalking Suggestions:

- Find someone like-minded to prayerwalk with. You may commit to prayerwalk together once or twice a week for a specified number of weeks or months.
- If you already walk to exercise, why not turn it into a prayerwalking time. Instead of walking the same course you could vary the streets you walk on to fully cover a given area.
- Consider making up a 3x5 card (or two) of Scriptures that may be helpful and carrying it with you as you prayerwalk. If you get short on ideas of what to pray for, pray through one of these verses and use it to spark thoughts of what to pray for.
- Be friendly to people you see. If they spark up a conversation, introduce yourself, tell them you are simply praying for their neighborhood, ask them if they have any specific requests, pray simply and quickly for their requests, and calmly move on. Don't try to preach at them unless the Holy Spirit prompts you of a divine appointment.
- Carry invite cards to your church to hand out when friendly conversations with disconnected people occur.

A Prayerwalking Story:

David Haskell was in his second year at the University of Oregon in 1979. He and his buddy, Jim, were eating hamburgers at McDonald's, discussing what impossible thing they could believe God for. Dave suggested ". . . that every student on campus hears the Gospel this year." There were 17,000 students, and they knew of 65 Christians on campus. "Now THAT would be impossible," exclaimed Jim.

They divided a university map into seven parts and spent 20-30 minutes a day walking around the designated territory for that day, asking God to do what He had promised Joshua: "I will give you every place where you set your foot" (Joshua 1:2-4). Even in the pouring rain, they walked, carrying umbrellas.

For everyone to hear the Gospel, each person had to be exposed to a believer, thought Dave and Jim. So as they walked around dormitories and fraternities, they asked God to place a Christian on every floor. There were 149 floors. Walking around each of the academic departments, they prayed for a believer in each place.

After two months, Dave thought, "this is the most ludicrous thing I have ever done in my life. If God does not answer prayer, what a waste of time." But they prayed on until spring, four months in all.

Then Josh McDowell, who has spoken about Christ at countless universities, spoke several times on campus at the invitation of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Thousands heard him. Jesus became the big topic of conversation for a week. Afterwards, although they were not evenly spread over the dormitory floors, there were over 149 new Christians. Every student had a chance to hear the Gospel.

Several years later, the University of Oregon was the most fruitful university ministries of The Navigators in the northwest U.S.A. A few years before Dave and Jim's walks, Campus Crusade, InterVarsity, and The Navigators had all considered terminating their ministries there for lack of results.

Dave later transferred to Wheaton College and then went on to be a missionary in Beirut, Lebanon. In both locations, he began prayer walking teams and experienced miraculous results. Are you walking through your city, praying for God to do impossible things?

The information contained in this document is adapted from these and other miscellaneous sources, including some copyrighted material.

Prayerwalking: Praying On Site With Insight, By Steven Hawthorne and Graham Kendrick, Creation House, 2003.

Prayerwalking: A New Approach to Spiritual Warfare, by Graham Kendrick and John Houghton, Kingsway Publications, 1990.

Participatory Missionary Prayer Manual, by John Huffman, Christ for the City, Intl.