

IPHC Men's Ministries



Prayer Walking

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Practical Prayer Walking

Many Christians have been learning to quietly pray in the places that they live, work or play. We've come to call this sort of on-site intercession "prayer walking."

Prayer walking is simply praying in the very places we expect God to bring forth his answers. Prayer walking is usually a low-profile affair: Friends or family stroll two-by-two through their own neighborhoods, schools and work places, praying as they go. Once in a while the prayers can be demonstrative, but most prayer walking is fairly quiet. It's usually being on the scene without making one.

As you pray God's promises with specific homes or worksites in view, you'll find that hope for those people begins to grow. You'll begin to see people as God might view them. You'll likely find yourself becoming more interested in the welfare of the people you are praying for. In other words, you might find yourself becoming the kind of neighbor that you always wanted to be.

Watch for the ways God impresses you to display his love in practical acts of kindness. Be ready to offer to pray with your neighbors as opportunity may arise. Ask God to give you opportunity to explain clearly how people can enjoy friendship with God by the power of the gospel.

What is Prayer Walking?

The Rise of On-Site Praying

God is stirring us to take our prayers beyond the walls of our church buildings. As we put feet to our prayers, we're beginning to pray with huge kingdom-sized hope for entire cities.

Prayer walking: Praying On-Site With Insight.

We've come to call this sort of on-site intercession "prayer walking." It's simply praying in the very places that we expect God to bring forth His answers.

The prayers are intercessory rather than devotional. Prayer walkers learn to pray beyond their own concerns, focusing prayer on behalf of their neighbors.

Prayer walking is usually a low-profile affair: Friends or family stroll two-by-two through their own neighborhoods, schools and work places, praying as they go. There are some occasions when the prayer should be demonstrative, but usually it's being on the scene without making one. Though they usually walk unnoticed, prayer walkers quickly become aware of the realities and needs of their neighbors.

Why is God raising up prayer walking now?

God is swamping Christians with hope. It's a huge hope; something like a collective holy hunch that He's about to do some of the finest displays of city-wide salvation. Prayer has always been God's way of putting His name on future events. He's setting us to pray larger things by giving them very specific attachments to places and people.

Perhaps prayer walking is a way that God is granting us a good look at the "Before" portrait of our cities. When days of great harvest come about, we will clearly see a very different "After" picture, and praise him all the more exuberantly.

Fulfilling Our "Seek and Save" Mission

Prayer walking certainly isn't the only way God is calling us to pray, but it may be the best way to be sure we have prayed for every person of our land. No list includes all of the homeless, or every child, or the transient, or fresh immigrants, or many others. If we are serious about praying for every person, it will require systematic, sustained prayer walking as an important part of our praying.

I'm convinced that Christ is fulfilling His "seek and save" mission (Luke 19:10). Our part of that mission involves seeking people. He will do the saving. Prayer walking may be the simplest way for us to seek people. Our prayers are without question God's preferred way to save people, because He is honored and thanked with every answer to prayer.

How to Prayer Walk

Praying On-Site With Insight

In hundreds of cities around the world, God is helping Christians to pray as they pass through the streets of their communities. We've come to use the word "prayer walking" to describe this kind of on-site intercession. Prayer walking is simply praying in the very places we expect God to bring forth the answers to our prayers.

Our prayers are extending beyond our own concerns, focusing directly on the needs of our neighbors. Prayer walking is not so much about walking or being outside. It's drawing nearer to those for whom we pray, so that we can be clearer about what we are to pray.

Pray with a Partner.

- You can prayer walk alone, but many find that their prayers are more focused when expressed with a friend.
- Pray audibly for clarity and better agreement.
- As you finish, discuss - or even write down - the prayers, people, and places of most importance. You'll be ready for the next round of on-site prayer.

Pray with God's Spirit.

- Invite the Spirit of God to accompany you, guiding your steps and your words.
- Be attentive during moments of silence, allowing the Holy Spirit to help you see with His eyes and pray in accordance with His heart.
- Address God directly when contending with evil or its aftermath. Ask God to redeem people as he restrains the enemy.

Pray with God's Word.

- Read Scripture aloud. God breathed it and loves to bless it.
- Express God's thoughts in your own words.
- Carry Scripture with you. Use a small Bible, or note cards.
- Choose a particular verse or theme as a base for your prayers throughout one day's prayer walk. Use another to launch your prayers the next day, and so on.

Pray with Purpose.

- Pray for the present-hour needs of people and places that you see.
- Sketch a map to focus on select streets and homes.
- Pray quietly. You can be on the scene without making one.
- In confidence of God's unfolding purpose which includes your preparation prayer, don't look to initiate gospel conversations during your prayer walk.
- Pray for God to open doors of communication soon.

- Explain what you are doing to inquirers: "We're praying God's blessing on the neighborhood. Are there specific ways we can pray for you or others?"

A Prayed-For Planet

Can you imagine living in a prayed-for city? It would be a community in which every person is being prayed for in Jesus name by caring Christian neighbors. How much room would God have to work? If anything good happened, people would give the Son of God at least partial credit. If anything drastic or difficult happened, people would still be looking in Christ's direction for help. If we work together with the help of God's Spirit, we may be soon living in a prayed-for world.

Saturation prayer is way of describing the work of filling a city or a relational setting with prayer. It can be used to describe a one-time event or project. It also describes ongoing efforts to keep on praying for every person in a particular area or network of people in a regular way.

Why should we pray for every person?

Our tendency is to pray for things that immediately concern us, or the people in our inner circle. But we have not prayed our best if we have merely prayed for ourselves and those close to us.

How widely should you pray? Many are finding that God is inviting them to launch into an adventure of praying for everyone throughout their neighborhood, or their workplace, or even entire communities. Praying beyond yourself with careful concern for everyone in a particular setting is called saturation prayer.

Saturation prayer is rarely something that happens spontaneously. Usually there is intentional planning and teamwork. In order to do something which requires this kind of forethought and follow-through, it's critical to have a firm grasp of why it's worth doing at all. Just why should we spend the hours it will take to plan, to mobilize those who will pray and of course, to actually do the praying for every person?

1. Pray for every person because scripture calls us to do it as a matter of top priority.

"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all people....This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

"First of all" means that it's a top priority. It's not a requirement or a command. Failure to pray for every person is not a matter of moral wrongdoing. Saturation prayer is not the right thing to do (as opposed to wrong or sinful things). It is instead one of the best and most precious things to do because of what God finds delightful and desirable (see verse 3 of 1 Timothy 2). God's desires and purposes encompass every single person. He desires all people to be saved. God's word urges us to expand our prayers to match God's heart.

2. Pray for every person because God is working to advance His purpose in every person's life.

God is advancing His purposes in every person's life. They may seem to you to be far from God, like an abandoned sheep, frightened, lost, and ravaged by evil. But they are considered sheep that are lost to God. Jesus reveals God's passion for every person. God has a heart of a shepherd, always thinking of every single person.

"What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?" (Matthew 18:12).

We would have never known Jesus' way of seeing people if He hadn't described it, but on one occasion, when surrounded on a throng of people, He told his followers how He saw people.

"Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36).

Jesus felt compassion for them, but it's important to notice that Jesus did not call for action based on His feelings of compassion. In order to describe what action was required, He changed the metaphor from lost sheep to an unfulfilled harvest.

"Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.'"

The image of harvest is not intended to suggest that ripe fields are being wasted. Despite many sermons to the contrary, Jesus is not suggesting that God can't get any help or that somehow that the harvest will fail for lack of human effort. Attention is brought instead to the Lord of the harvest. God Himself has implanted something worthy and wonderful in the soil of the people and the society. There is something He finds precious that He has nurtured and guarded. He wills to bring home the fruit of changed lives that pleases Him. And thus Jesus calls His followers to pray that God will do something that they cannot.

Jesus is not an activist or an opportunist. He instead recognizes that there is something that God has started and advanced which He will bring to fulfillment. The prayer is for God to finish what He's begun. As Ed Silvano has often said, nothing is wrong with the harvest. God has brought that to a ripe moment. The laborers are few. But it is God's work to send laborers as well.

The point is this: That God is watching and working in every person's life. But God loves to work in accordance with the prayers of His people. At special moments He longs to hear the prayers of His people calling upon Him to finish what He has begun, bringing about an ingathering.

3. Pray for every person because it glorifies God.

Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13). When you pray, God chooses how and when He will act. Prayers are never automatic. Prayer is not a mechanism or a mere technique

of leveraging heaven's compliance with your desires. God is always wiser and greater than our best prayers. But He loves to answer our prayers, no matter how confused they may be. And this is why: He is honored, revealed, praised and glorified when He answers prayer.

Prayer makes God's hand evident. Prayer makes God public. He can be thanked to the extent that He has been requested. Prayer could be God's favorite way of being glorified. That's why He's stimulating so many of His followers to carefully pray for every person in their cities or other relational settings. It's God's way of setting Himself up for glory as never before.

When we pray for every person in an area and as those people come to learn that they are being prayed for, God will almost always be looked to and honored as never before. For those who love God, such glory really matters.

4. Pray for every person because it changes us.

One pastor said of prayer walking throughout his city: "We would do this even if God didn't answer the prayers." Why? "Because it changes us." We start seeing with His eyes. We start feeling with His heart." And then he quickly added, "And we are seeing God answer many prayers. But we would prayer walk our city even if we didn't because I haven't seen anything else that will change us to have his heart like this."

People who pray into the story of what God is doing in people's lives with persistence find themselves moved with wholesome compassion, like Jesus. Steady prayer focused on God's purposes will infuse an attitude and conviction of hope.

Love without hope usually sours into pity. No one wants to be pitied. But if our love is fused with vibrant, prayer-shaped hope for others, we will find ourselves yearning effortlessly for their best interests. We will find ourselves viewing them with a dignity deriving from the awesome prospects of God's work in their lives coming to completion.

Faith without hope usually shrivels into selfishness. No one who prays likes to think of them self as selfish, but unless faith is mingled with expectant, kingdom-sized hope for others, usually our faith turns inward. We find ourselves believing for personal things. Not too much later we find ourselves struggling to believe even for our personal affairs. How crucial it is that our love and our faith are focused with huge, God-sized hope for others.

The only way to nourish hope is to pray according to God's kingdom-sized purposes in the lives of others.

Those who pray for others find themselves prepared with a wealth of insight and concern for those they are praying for. When those who pray find themselves interacting with those for whom they pray, their conversation is filled with wisdom and sensitivity. It's not hard to figure out how such winsome wisdom is formed. Hope-focused praying develops a courageous kindness and a supernatural rapport.

How do people get started in pursuing prayer for everyone in their neighborhood or workplace?

Saturation prayer can begin on any scale. It can be a short list of three people. Or it can grow to a dozen households near your home. Or it can eventually be an entire community or region. Begin with others if at all possible. Start small. Grandiose plans aren't nearly as valuable as simple persistence.

1. Find your "field."

Prayer walk where you live or work. Who are the people that you sense God is giving you concern and hope for? Push a little beyond your immediate circle of family and friends. Try praying for some of them by name. Ask God to give you a sense of responsibility. You'll come to learn the names and lives of those for whom you pray. Let God instill within you a sense of compassion and hope.

You'll certainly want to prayer walk in an ongoing way, but on-site intercession is not necessarily a daily essential. Find creative ways to do the work of ongoing prayer.

2. Sense the season.

Work your field as if you were a farmer. All times are not equal. There will be times to give extra attention and time to praying. Sometimes it's time for farmers to pull weeds or to deal with pests. Other times it's time to sow seeds. And of course, there are special times of harvest.

Set a time frame in which you will pray with regularity. It may be a period of weeks or several months. At the end of that time, evaluate your efforts. Don't hesitate to change your plans and redirect your prayers to other fields or do something else for a season if you sense God's Spirit directing you to do so.

3. Pray with purpose.

Any requests? Probably not. You may not know specific needs which would become the basis for what we usually consider a "prayer request." Don't be frustrated in the slightest about not knowing what people think their needs are. You actually have an entire library of information about what God's purposes are for them. Almost any page of scripture has statements and stories which are pertinent for prayers. Settle on a few promises and expressions of purpose. Pray the same prayers repeatedly. You'll find yourself refining a few prayers until you have one simple prayer which will come to your memory easily. This is the kind of praying which is described as praying without ceasing. Have a prayer formed over time, which you will never cease to pray until God answers it.

As you pray you will find yourself changing to be the very kind of person who can serve the ones for whom you pray. Look for God to open ways that you can serve them in practical ways. Watch for the times when those for whom you pray will enter into meaningful conversation with you. God often loves to those who are praying an opportunity to pray with the person in simple, life-giving ways which model what

friendship with God is all about. And of course, don't be surprised if God opens ways for you to communicate the joy of knowing God and introducing people to Jesus.

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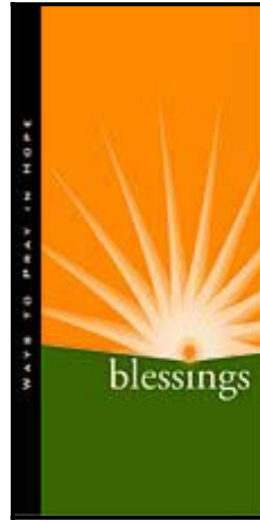
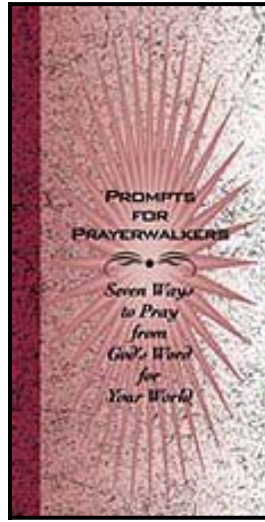
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Prayer Tools



Prompts for Prayer Walkers: Ways to Pray from God's Word for Your World

A resource that will help put words to some of the prayers forming in your heart for the people around you. Scriptures are placed next to prayer ideas, giving you confidence that you are praying God's heart for your community. A favorite among those who are getting started with prayer walking, as well as those who are undertaking overseas prayer journeys. 16 pp. Pocket-sized for easy reference

Blessings: Ways to Pray in Hope

This resource helps you pray with hope for God's great intended goodness for near neighbors or distant nations. A discreet design helps you prayer walk with wisdom and sensitivity in difficult places. Pray toward the bright hope of entire communities being transformed by the power and life of Christ. There are seven themes of blessing in a convenient 16-page format.

Contact Waymakers for pricing