

Prayer Walking – a practical introduction

David Black described the current vision of *Pray for Scotland* in this way:

"invading the nation and your neighbourhood with united, believing and persistent prayer"

One of the main ways he envisaged this being done is by us walking through our streets, villages, towns and cities, praying as we walk.

To encourage you in this, here are some guidelines and ideas on various aspects of prayer walking:

Prayer Walking for a purpose

God has a purpose for us in the place where he has put us - a Kingdom purpose. There is a way he wants us to live, there are things he wants us to say and do which will be part of expressing and extending Jesus' kingdom in our area. Prayer walking can be used as a way of discovering more of that purpose by us looking and listening to discover what God wants to show us.

What might we see as we walk through our area with this in mind?

What are we being given?

In Numbers 13:17 -20 spies were sent to "prayer walk" in Canaan to see the land that God was going to give them.

When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, "Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees on it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land."

This was the place God was intending them to live in, so it was important that they got to know as much about it as they could. Unfortunately only two of the twelve "prayer walkers" saw God's perspective on the places they explored.

What do you know about the area you live in? Walking and praying throughout it can show you what you need to know.

2. What are we up against?

When going into the promised land, Joshua knew that God was with him to overcome the enemy, and as part of his strategy, he sent two spies to see what the enemy was doing, and what situation they would face when they sought to displace the people of Jericho. The spies discovered from Rahab,

"I know that the Lord has given the land to you and that a great fear has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you." (Joshua 2:9)

In prayer walking our area, we may find some centres of activity that are against Jesus, but rather than that making us afraid, we can find from God encouragement in how he wants us to win. We can expect things to change in the areas in which we are engaging in prayer.

3. What are we to build here?

Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:11-18) had a desire to rebuild God's city, and with a few men prayer walked the broken down walls. After seeing the situation and seeing God's purpose, they said, "Let us start rebuilding"

Prayer walking our area can lead us into God's "building programme" - to bring as they did, restoration and protection.

4. What are we here to shift?

In Mark 11:11, "Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany." Jesus, in walking round the temple area saw what needed to be removed - the things that hindered people from meeting with God there. Then, the next day, he went back and moved them!

In prayer walking our area, we have the opportunity to see things that God may want us to challenge or to see removed from our area.

5. What might happen with us here?

When in Acts 8v26, Philip was taken for an unexpected "prayer walk" on a desert road, he found that he was in place for one of God's "coincidences" - in meeting the Ethiopian official who was seeking God.

When we prayer walk we put ourselves in the situation where God can use us to meet with individuals who otherwise may not have the contact they need with Jesus' kingdom.

(b) Prayer Walking for a place

What are we seeking to do for the place we are prayer walking?

Here are some headings that can help us focus as we pray.

We are here to

1. **Look** - What catches my attention?
2. **Bless** - What good words can I say here?
3. **Displace** - What bad influences are affecting here?
4. **Cleanse** - What bad things have happened here?
5. **Stand for** - What good things are represented here?
Stand against - What bad things are represented here?
6. **Proclaim** - What does God want to do here?
7. **Ask** - What is needed from God here?
8. **Connect** - How can I bring heaven here?
9. **Serve** - What can I give here?
10. **Listen** - What does God want to say to me here?

(c) Prayer Walking – praying for people

The *Pray for Scotland* prayer card can be a starting point to help us focus our prayers for people as we prayer walk our area.

The card says,

"Praying for Scotland - praying for you

for wrongs to be put right, for hurts to be healed, for Jesus love to be known."

We are looking for God to intervene in the life of our nation by intervening in the lives of individuals and families.

We are praying that wrongs that have been done to them will be put right.

We are praying that wrongs that have been done by them will be put right.

We are praying that hurts that they have suffered will be healed.

We are praying that hurts that they have caused will be healed.

We are praying that Jesus' love will be made known to them.

We are praying that Jesus' love will be made known through them.

The prayer cards are a point of contact for the people we are praying for. At some point, a card could be delivered to the house or given to the person we have been praying for.

It lets them know:

"Christians from many churches are praying on the streets of Scotland. If you would like further prayer, help or information we would be glad to hear from you."

There is space on the card for a local contact person, phone number or address, along with the Pray for Scotland national contact details.

There are also window stickers available so that if an area is being covered with prayer cards, a window sticker can identify homes and churches in the area where there is someone representing that local prayer initiative. The stickers can also be used in cars. (See also section 4.4)

(d) Prayer Walking in partnership

The more people involved, the more of Scotland's streets and neighbourhoods are going to be covered in prayer, so where can you find the partnership to prayer walk?

- with a Christian neighbour - you could take on your street or neighbourhood - you could use the idea that someone found useful - that of putting a leaflet in every door saying that you are going to be praying in that area, and asking anyone who would like to join in the project to get in touch with you.

- with your housegroup - define an area and make it part of your regular programme. It need not take the place of another activity - for instance, people could pray for the streets they come along on their way to the housegroup meeting.

- with your church fellowship / congregation - strategising for the area that you are involved in.

- with other Christians/ churches in your town - making it a project to cover the whole area - and with joint contact details on the card so that people can see that it is united prayer for them and interest in them.

Prayer walking in partnership can be done by people prayer walking individually as part of a joint project.

When it is being done this way, it is important to meet up and to share with each other and to encourage one another.

It is also good to prayer walk in partnership with others. Sometimes in praying with others, we can be self-conscious and it is easy to be looking to others to do things rather than ourselves.

A good way round this is this simple plan:

Have copies of a street map of the area.

Form groups of 4s and number the people in the group, 1,2,3 and 4.

Person 1 is allocated the responsibility of where the group goes to prayer walk (if needed the group can travel by car to their starting point).

Person 2 is allocated the responsibility of leading the prayer in the place they go to, by praying out loud themselves, and giving others the opportunity to do so, and also to decide any particular ways of praying e.g. deciding that each person could pray for three homes in that street.

Person 3 is allocated to "watch" - to look to see what they notice in the area, to see what they feel as the others are praying, to be open to receiving pictures, words or impressions from the Holy Spirit related to that place.

Person 4 is allocated a notebook, and the responsibility of making a note of the prayer time, anything significant that was said, done or noticed in that place.

Groups can then meet back together and share their experiences.

If there is time for the group to go to more than one place, the numbers can be swapped round so that each has a different responsibility.

(e) Prayer Walking for a plan

Prayer walking only makes sense as part of a greater plan. One way of highlighting this is to ask, "What happens if/when our prayers for people in the neighbourhood are answered?" People we are praying for need points of connection. Prayer walking can be one strand of the net which will "catch" people.

Prayer walking plans could involve

- using the *Pray for Scotland* cards and window stickers.
 - visiting with, or delivering information about church activities in the area.
 - following the prayer walking with home meetings in the area or programmes such as Alpha.
- Prayer walking can also be usefully used as part of seeking to discern the right way forward in planning evangelistic activity in an area. So where there is already a plan, prayer walking can become part of it, where there is as yet no plan, prayer walking is a good way of exploring an area, and can be a way of hearing from heaven about the particular focus for action there, both with a short term project or a longer term programme in an area..

Whatever you do in prayer walking in your area, you will be part of the plan to see as much as we can of every home, neighbourhood, village, town and city in Scotland being prayed for.

You might like to get organised with others to ensure nowhere in your area is missed.

If you get in touch with *Pray for Scotland*, you could let us know where is being covered, and we may be able to put you in touch with other praying people near you, so that you can encourage one another and perhaps plan and work together.

(f) Prayer Walking for power

In prayer walking the streets, we are acknowledging that there is a need in our nation for much more than is at present being experienced. That "more" is the power of God coming in a greater measure.

It is a wonderful encouragement to us in this to know that revivals in Scotland's history have come when there have been people praying for their communities to experience God's power. In Kenneth Jeffrey's book, "When the Lord Walked the Land" (Paternoster Press) in which he charts his extensive research on the 1858-62 Revival in the North East of Scotland, this is one of his conclusions:

"The 1858-62 revival in north east Scotland was precipitated by one common feature in each of the places where it was experienced. It was desired and expected in every community that felt its influence."

"Wherever revival appeared, it was preceded by a spirit of longing and waiting."

In another local revival setting in the north east later in that century, my great grandfather prayed in a way that I like to copy - and is very appropriate for prayer-walking the land. The account says that after describing the needs of the local community, he prayed thus,

"We are helpless, Lord! We are helpless. Interfere, Lord! Interfere!"

Graeme Young.