

Prayer Walk



Overview

A prayer walk is a “stroll with a divine purpose,” praying for a community while walking through it. The primary purpose of prayer walks is to intercede for the community. However, prayer walks are also part of discipleship for Christians, assisting followers of Christ in developing the vital skill of prayer. Prayer walks can also have specific purposes. Christians considering starting a new church in a community will prayer walk, asking God to provide discernment through the experience. Another example of a targeted prayer walk is asking God to heal a community that has experienced conflict or tragedy.

Planning a Prayer Walk

Form a team.

Look for a leader or leaders with the gift organizing and a heart for prayer, outreach or the community. If your church prefers forming a team, it's best if one person is selected as the coordinator within the team.

Determine the purpose of the prayer walk.

Planning a prayer walk starts with determining the purpose of the prayer walk. Answering the “why” question is important for choosing the location, recruiting people to participate and focusing prayers while walking.

Select where to prayer walk.

Open a map and study the neighborhood or community where the prayer walk will occur. Create boundaries for the prayer walk, then within the boundaries specific routes for prayer walkers. Make maps of the routes, whether by writing down streets or printing out maps.

Select the date and time for the prayer walk.

Start by eliminating days and times when the fewest members or supporters can participate. Once the options are narrowed down, look for the best possible dates and times to hold the prayer walk. While individuals may prayer walk on their own at night, it is not recommended for organized prayer walks.

Recruit participants.

The most effective way to recruit prayer walkers is to ask them personally. Tell them the purpose of the prayer walk, what happens in a prayer walk and exactly where and when the prayer walk will occur. It is highly recommended to send prayer walkers out in pairs (see Mark 6:7 and Luke 10:1). Thus, one effective recruitment strategy is asking those you recruit to commit to bringing one other person to walk together.

Inform the congregation(s).

If a church is sponsoring the prayer walk, make sure members who cannot participate in the walk still can pray for the experience. Widely publicize the prayer walk. This includes sharing why the church is prayer walking, defining prayer walking and sharing when the prayer walk will occur. The same is done in several churches coming together for the prayer walk.

Gather resources for the Prayer Walk

Prayer Walk Chart: The chart includes space for the name of the people walking, the path they will walk and a cell phone number for the walkers. Start to fill this out before the prayer walk; complete it when everyone gathers for the prayer walk.

Prayer Walk Guide: Ensure the front of the Prayer Walk Guide includes space for the name and cell phone number for the person coordinating the prayer walk. Add this information Prayer Walk Guide when preparing for the prayer walk. It is good to gather pens or pencils to provide with the guides.

Maps: Make sure you have at least two maps for each route.

Inclement Weather: Depending on where you are leading the prayer walk, collect donations of bottled water, sun block or inexpensive rain slickers.

Gather for the Prayer Walk

Gathering:

The coordinator for the prayer walk should arrive at an agreed upon location a half hour before the prayer walk. The Prayer Walk Chart should be filled out as walkers arrive. Give the walkers their Prayer Walk Guide and map or path after they sign in to the walk. Also hand out water, sunblock, etc. at this time.

Preparing:

Once everyone has Prayer Walk Guides and map or route, gather everyone together. Thank everyone for participating. Explain clearly why the prayer walk is being held.

Equipping:

Ask the prayer walkers to look at the Prayer Walk Guide. Under the "Walk" section, talk about how the participants can pray silently or pray aloud quietly. Ask them to allow what they see to inspire their petitions. Also point out the Bible passages on the back of the guide were provided as inspiration for the prayer walk.

Next review the "Questions to Ask" section. Share the walkers may meet people who are curious about what they are doing. Encourage them to answer honestly. If those who are curious are willing to answer questions, a few starter questions are provided. If at all possible, ask the final question about praying for the person who was curious. It is appropriate to ask for permission to come back and follow up on how God answers the prayer.

Finally, the "Contact Information" section is for those people met by the prayer walkers. If people are willing to talk more about the community, receive a follow up to personal prayer or want to talk about Jesus, record the contact information here.

Debrief

As people return, ask them about the experience. Offer them more water, etc. If the walks gathered contact information, record it on the Prayer Walk Report form.

Once everyone has returned, ask participants to share their experiences with everyone else. Before closing, share details about any subsequent prayer walks. Close with a prayer of thanks.