

# Nine Reasons Churches and Small Groups Should be Prayer Walking

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**HOPE INITIATIVE**

“Prayer walking” is exactly what the word says: intentionally praying while I walk, particularly in neighborhoods. Here’s why this approach is a good one:

- 1. Prayer walking requires church members to get outside the walls of the church.** Far too many churches are so inwardly focused they think about only the people *inside* their building. It’s tough to reach non-believers if they’re never on your mind.
- 2. Prayer walking helps believers see non-believers in a different way.** Most of us pass many non-believers as we go to church every weekend *without ever considering their spiritual condition*. Prayer walking requires us to look at people with God’s eyes, seeing them as sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36).
- 3. Prayer walking leads people to pray in a focused way.** Many believers struggle with prayer because they haven’t been taught how to pray. They don’t know how to start, how to stay focused, or how to end. Good prayer walking training helps address these issues, at least in praying for people we see.
- 4. We can prayer walk almost anywhere.** Believers can walk through their neighborhoods. Students can walk through their schools. Employees can walk through their place of employment. Church members can walk through communities, focusing on places like other churches, government buildings, schools, or places of sin.
- 5. Prayer walking helps us see things we’ve missed before.** Maybe we didn’t see that sign about the mosque to be built on the next street. Perhaps we didn’t read that church flyer about a divorce recovery conference or that “for sale” sign about a home foreclosure. Maybe we saw, but ignored, that homeless shelter, that local bar, or that gang hangout. Every one of these “sightings” should drive us to prayer.
- 6. Entire families can prayer walk.** With families so often separated in church activities, we need ministries that families can do together. Preschoolers as well as senior adults can prayer walk; in fact, it’s not uncommon to hear preschoolers and children pray passionately for other kids they see as they walk.
- 7. Families sometimes meet neighbors for the first time during prayer walking.** Life is so busy that we often don’t take time to know the people who live around us. Prayer walking requires us to slow down and look around – and perhaps talk with somebody who needs to know Jesus.
- 8. We might pray for someone for whom nobody else is praying.** Even in North America, there are people for whom no one is praying – and in some cases, for whom no one has ever prayed. We may, in fact, be the first person ever to intercede for somebody. That’s a powerful thought.
- 9. Somebody might follow Jesus as a result of prayer walking.** As we see others and pray for them, we might get to know them. A friendship then becomes an open door to share the gospel. And, the gospel is still the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

# Ten Ways to Prayer Walk or Prayer Drive in a Community

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Many of us walk through our neighborhoods regularly, and almost all of us drive through our communities daily. What we often fail to do is use these times to pray. If you are praying during either of these opportunities, here are some things you might look for to focus your praying:

- 1. Evidence of children in a home.** Maybe there are toys in the driveway or a swing set in the back yard. Perhaps the kids are playing outside. Where you see this evidence, pray for (a) wisdom for parents, and for (b) grace that the parents and the children would know the Lord.
- 2. “For Sale” signs in the yard.** Here, pray that the family moving out will experience a gospel witness and find a church home wherever they’re moving. Then pray for the family moving in that (a) if they’re believers, you could join forces to reach the neighborhood, or (b) if they’re not believers, someone—beginning with you—will be a witness to them.
- 3. Places of worship.** If it’s a church, pray that the true gospel will be preached there. If the place of worship represents another non-Christian faith, pray God will turn its adherents to the true gospel—and that Christians in the community will be loving witnesses to them.
- 4. Homes in apparent disarray.** Often, those signs indicate some kind of chaos in that home. That could be anything from family conflict to unemployment to health issues to aging homeowners—but prayer is in order. God knows what’s going on behind closed doors.
- 5. Neighbors also walking or driving through the neighborhood.** You may or may not know the person, but simply seeing him or her deepens and can focus your burden for your neighbor. Somehow, briefly looking with gospel intentionality into the face of someone created in the image of God can change your heart.
- 6. Places of education.** Christian educators know how much they need prayer every day. How much more that seems apparent for administrators, teachers, and students in the public school system! Pray particularly that Christians of all ages in that context will be strong witnesses for Christ within that setting.
- 7. Sites of government leadership.** Paul told us to pray “for kings and all those who are in authority” (2 Tim 2:2)—and seeing the place where leaders serve reminds us to pray for them. Frankly, we often need this reminder to pray for salvation and wisdom for folks with whom we disagree politically.
- 8. Places of business.** You might typically pick one place of business as you drive to work each day and pray for its owners. Or, you might begin praying for any business you visit (e.g., a grocery store, a restaurant, a barber, a gas station, etc.). The prayer targets are right there in front of you—you just have to be intentional.
- 9. Places of “life and death” service.** Here, think of places like hospitals, fire stations, police departments, prisons, funeral homes, and cemeteries. Because we believe Christ and the gospel are the key to abundant and eternal life, we should pray for those who deal with life and death issues every day.
- 10. Your own home and workplace.** Sometimes we pray for other people and places but fail to pray for ourselves. Pray for your home and the place you work every time you park in the driveway or in the parking lot

**We hope these ideas encourage and help you to pray!**