

If you are looking for another way to pray for people on your prayer route—or on your block—you may find this strategy useful. One of our Prayer Champions uses this approach and has found people to be really receptive.

## **Neighborhood Prayer Request Ministry**

Ministry Mission: “Share the gospel with our local neighborhood through building trusted relationships established by a continual offering of prayer.”

- 1.) Select a neighborhood on your route or near your church with approximately 120 residences. Be sure to consider apartments, duplexes, condos, etc when counting residences.
- 2.) On a clip board create a spreadsheet with columns for the residence number, first name, date and prayer request. See partial sample below.

Number	Name	Prayer Request
	Joyce	017: Recently moved from Sacramento- a job for Jim, friends for Joyce
	June	017: John’s Dad diabetes, June asked us to pray for government leaders

- 3.) Be prepared: dress comfortably, and in addition to your clipboard carry a small New Testament, extra pens and business cards for your church. (Our purpose is not to witness, but to ask how our church can pray for them; However, you should always be prepared to share Christ when appropriate.)
- 4.) Be spiritually prepared: prior to knocking on the first door of the day...pray for the neighbors you will be meeting and that you will be a good representative of Jesus Christ.
- 5.) Start at one end of the neighborhood and work your way through it in an orderly pattern. Don’t skip residences, just go from door to door.
- 6.) Knock on the door (door bells don’t always work and aren’t always appreciated) and then take a couple steps away from the door so you are not “in their face” when they open the door.
- 7.) Make your greeting friendly and get to the point quickly. Perhaps something like:

Hi, my name is Bill and I attend \_\_\_\_\_ Church which is just around the corner. We are a church that believes in prayer and because we are a neighborhood church, we want to be praying for our neighbors. Do you have any prayer requests that I can take to our prayer team so they can be praying?

- 8.) Be sure to write down their first name and prayer request. Then thank them and move on to the next residence. If they have no prayer requests simply thank them and let them know you will be by again in a few months. You may work for an hour or whatever time you have available.
- 9.) At the end of your time list all of the prayer requests received that day and send them in an email to your church groups that meet to pray during the coming week. You could use a format such as:

The following prayer requests were received from the neighborhood as I went door to door this week:  
 9/23/17  
 Janna- Asked us to pray that her family would have unity and get along better.  
 Donna- Her friend’s (Alicia) Brother-in-law died. Pray for our President and for peace/

10.) You should plan on covering the neighborhood about every three to four months. If you go more often, they may feel like you were just there yesterday. If you go less often, they forget that you were there before. So by trial and error, I have found that every three to four months is just about right.

Marcile's reflection on prayer is an excellent short-course for anyone who wants their prayer life to grow. This article does not have anything specific about prayer walking but you may find it helps your prayer life in general.

## **Ten Reasons I Pray (Plus Ten Hindrances)**

**By Marcile Crandall**

*"It's not the product, it's the process!"* This was the comment of one of our sons-in-law as he was plowing some new ground in the field of religious art. But this is an important reminder for all of us as we learn to pray. The goal of our praying is not the product, but the process- the process of becoming humble before God, of being persistent in our asking, of confidently bringing our requests to God. I believe this whole process is used by God to mold us into disciples who will glorify him. In addition, praying often brings desired changes into situations and relationships.

*But, what are the real reasons I pray?* Just asking the questions has helped me evaluate my prayer life. I asked myself whether I'm just praying out of habit, or because the practice of prayer continues to be useful and worthwhile. Here's my list, in no set order:

### **Reasons to pray:**

1. **I pray to offer my worship to the LORD.** Over and over Scripture directs us to offer praise and worship to God. This intentional practice helps me remember the proper order of my world and the worthiness of the LORD I have chosen [to serve].
2. **I pray because I appreciate the community I experience in prayer.** My own small group of pray-ers offers a glimpse of the compassion of God and becomes the "little church" in action lifting burdens to God on behalf of others.
3. **I pray as a way of acknowledging my weakness an inability to do what needs to be done.** To accept Christ's invitation to cast all my burdens on him is such a relief.
4. **I pray because I find an intimacy with God as I pray.** Often in the secret place of prayer I can express my heart's need to God and allow him to know me in deep ways. I feel safe.
5. **I pray because I have a foundation of lifelong trust in the goodness of God.** When doubt, feelings of inadequacy, or simply apathy are large in my thinking, I know God is faithful, even if I am not.
6. **I pray because it is a way I can accept the gracious invitation of God to come into his presence.**
7. **I pray to acknowledge my own humanity to God.** This reminds me I am finite and cannot handle life on my own.
8. **I pray because prayer is my chosen way to move toward God when I feel estranged from him or depressed.** The conscious choice to pray is often a first step in moving out of myself and back into relationship with God.
9. **I pray because I want to make prayer a constant part of my life.** I'm trying to form the habit of praying without ceasing. I yearn to be in an attitude of prayer throughout the day. I desire to live life on two levels: working, talking and going about my business; and all the while in constant communion on a deeper level with the Spirit of Christ—as Thomas Kelly writes about in his book *A Testament of Devotion*.
10. **I pray because I need help and because often I simply do not know what to do.**

Throughout my life, experience has given me the confidence and understanding to be bold in the way of prayer. One of the blessings of growing older as a follower of Christ is being able to look back on a multitude of touch points where we have experienced the faithfulness of Christ. Those experiences give us confidence to be bold in coming to God in prayer.

### **Hindrances to Prayer:**

As I have practiced prayer and experienced the power and blessing of prayer, I've also recognized there are many difficulties that keep me from praying as readily as I'd like. Here's my honest list of hindrances that I'm sure are shared by other believers.

1. **I tend to be impatient and want quick answers to my prayers.** *It's the process, remember?* Many times the work of prayer takes so much concentration and persistence that I become restless or disheartened, tempted to give up.
2. **I don't understand why God chooses to heal some people and not others.** This may trip up more pray-ers than any other factor. All of us who have practiced the discipline of prayer have faced the reality that sometimes our prayer for healing has not been answered- at least in the way that we had hoped. At this point, a part of our discipline must be learning to affirm that God is good all the time, and God is sovereign. I can't understand this but must learn that it's true. Sometimes I think I know what needs to be accomplished and exactly what God's answer should be. Times like this are when I need to say, "Nevertheless... I wait upon you, God."
3. **Sometimes my praying seems dull and unfocused.** I have heard some old saints describe this condition as praying "with skies of brass"- especially when this dullness goes on for a while without much response from within. This "plodding praying" becomes an act of total obedience to Christ and is very difficult for me.
4. **Some circumstances drain me so completely of emotional and physical strength that I feel unable to pray.** At time like this when my own resources are gone, I need the community of faith to surround me and lift prayers to God on my behalf.
5. **Sometimes the busyness of life squeezes out time of prayer.** Prayer is work. I need to give intentional time and space to the discipline of prayer. And it takes time for me to center my spirit of Christ, and real effort to gather my thoughts and focus them in prayer.
6. **Sometimes my thoughts are so scattered that I feel unable to concentrate in prayer.**
7. **It's tough to maintain faith as I pray for salvation or a change of situation for someone I love.** I believe these are the times when I must pray, "LORD, I believe. Help my unbelief." This is another time when sisters and brothers in Christ must come alongside and offer their strong faith to help carry mine.
8. **I fear that my prayer may sometimes bring answers I won't like.** The answer that comes may be leading to go or do something I would rather not do.
9. **Often the scope of my prayer is so great that I feel unworthy to bring the subject to God.** Thankfully, God's answer to my prayer is not dependent upon my own level of confidence but upon the mighty goodness of God. One of the wonderful mysteries of prayer is God's delight to hear me, his child.
10. **I need to pray in God's will, but how do I know God's will?** There are some times when I'll never know for sure what the will of our sovereign God is. Yet I believe the Holy Spirit will teach me and will guide me as I honestly seek to know truth.

*Prayer is communication.* There will always be difficulties as we learn to communicate better in this practice of prayer, but the more we pray, the more comfortable and enjoyable the experience becomes.

Here is another Prayer walking guide you may want to look at—it is a little longer than the first guide and includes a few other ideas some might find helpful.

## **A Short Course in Prayer walking**

In hundreds of cities across the globe, ordinary believers are prayer walking through the streets of their communities. They pray while walking, with eyes open for the spiritual awakening God is bringing.

We define prayer-walking as “praying on-site with insight.” There is no set pattern or proven formula. Prayer walkers have set out with every imaginable style. There’s nothing magic at all in the footsteps. God’s Spirit is simply helping us to pray with persistent spontaneity in the midst of the very settings in which we expect him to answer our prayers. We instinctively draw near to those for whom we pray.

Getting up close to the community focuses our prayer. We sharpen our prayers by concentrating on specific homes and families. But, we enlarge our praying as well, crying out for entire communities to know God’s healing presence.

Quiet prayer walks complement more high-profile marches and prayer rallies. Worship and warfare blend with intercession that Christ would be welcomed as Lord by many throughout the entire city.

Prayer walks give us a simple way to continually fill our streets with prayer. Many are praying city-size prayers while ranging throughout their towns with disciplined regularity in small bands of two or three. In this way prayer walkers keep near their neighbors in order to touch our cities with the gospel and transforming service. Quiet triumphs often follow as God changes the city day by day and house by house.

### **How to Get Started Prayer walking**

- **Join with other believers.** Join your faith with others to help prayer flow in an engaging conversational style. Large groups sometimes fail to give everyone a chance to participate. Pairs and triplets work best.
- **Set aside time.** Allowing one or two full hours gives prayer walkers a good chance to manage preliminaries and follow-up discussions, although much can be done in less time.
- **Choose an area.** Ask God to guide you. It’s best by far to learn the joys of prayer walking in unfamiliar neighborhoods. You’ll return quickly to your own neighborhood with fresh vision. Centers of commerce and religion are fascinating, but there’s nothing like touching families, schools, and churches in residential areas. Use elevated points to pray over a panorama. Linger at specific sites which seem to be key.
- **Pray with insight.** Pray for people you see. As you do, you might find the Spirit of God recalibrating your heart with his own sensitivities. Enhance these responsive insights with research done beforehand. Use knowledge of past events and current trends to enrich intercession. Above all, pray Scripture. If you have no clear place to begin praying, select just about any of the biblical prayers, and you will find that they almost pray themselves.
- **Focus on God.** Make God’s promises rather than Satan’s schemes the highlight of your prayer. Your discernment of evil powers may at times exceed God’s specific guidance to engage them in direct combat. Consider the simplicity of first making direct appeal to the throne of God before attempting to pick street fights with demonic powers. Seek a restraining order from heaven upon evil so that God’s empowered people may bring forth God’s intended blessing on the city.
- **Regather and report.** Share what you have experienced and prayed. Expressing something of your insights and faith will encourage others— as well as yourself. Set plans for further prayer walking.
- **Coordinate efforts.** Enlist other praying people to join with friends to cover special areas. Give leadership by forming and mixing prayer bands. Seek to collect written notes recording which areas have been covered and

what kinds of prayers have been prayed. Pool your insights to ascertain whether God is prompting a repeated focus on a particular areas. Eventually aim to cover your entire town or city, unless God guides otherwise.

### **Themes for Prayer walking**

Attempt to keep every prayer pertinent to the specific community you pass through. As you do, you will find prayers naturally progress to the nation and to the world.

Use a theme passage of Scripture. Unless God guides you to use another, try 1 Timothy 2:1-10. Many have found it to be a useful launching point for prayer walking. Verse 8 speaks of the important territorial dimension to prayer connected with God's desire that all people be saved. "I want the men *in every place* to pray" (italics added).

Copy this and other passages in a format easy to read aloud several times during your walk. Each of the following prayer points emerges from this passage.

- **Concerning Christ:** Proclaim him afresh to be the one Mediator and the ransom for all. Name him Lord of the neighborhood and of the lives you see.
- **Concerning leaders:** Pray for people responsible in any position of authority- for teachers, police, administrators and parents.
- **Concerning peace:** Cry out for the godliness and holiness of God's people to increase into substantial peace. Pray for new churches to be established.
- **Concerning truth:** Declare openly the bedrock reality that there is one God. Celebrate the faithful revelation of his truth to all peoples through ordinary people (1 Tim 2:8). Pray that the eyes of minds would cease to be blinded by Satan so that they could come to a knowledge of truth.
- **Concerning the gospel:** Praise God for his heart's desire that all people be saved. Ask that heaven would designate this year as a "proper time" for the testimony of Christ to be given afresh with simple power (1 Tim 2:6). Name specific people.
- **Concerning the blessing of God:** Thanksgivings are to be made on behalf of all people. Give God the explicit thanks he deserves for the goodness he constantly bestows on the homes you pass by. Ask to see the city with his eyes, that you might sense what is good and pleasing in his sight as well as what things grieve him deeply. Ask God to bring forth an enduring spiritual awakening.
- **Concerning the church:** Ask for healing in relationships, that there be no wrath or dissension among God's people. Ask that God would make his people, men and women alike, expressive in worship with the substance of radiant, relational holiness. Ask that our worship would be adorned with the confirming power of saints doing good in our communities.

Excerpts from *Prayerwalking* by Steve Hawthorne and Graham Kendrick (Creation House, 1993).