

Prayer Walk on Campus

What is it? A prayer walk is simply an on-site prayer meeting. Walking on campus has a way of stirring up ideas, insights and faith in those who are gathered, in a way that sitting in a room may not. There is a risk in being out in the open and doing something unusual, and that also can stir up faith and vision! There are lots of different ways to do a prayer walk. I will describe one format in detail, and then give some other themes that you can use, as well.

Spying out the Land, like Joshua and Caleb and the Spies in Numbers 13

Situation: a good starting point for a prospective chapter plant, or for advancing a work on a campus where the chapter is not growing. Like the spies in Numbers, you are checking out the resources and obstacles to establishing or advancing a witnessing community here.

Goal: To gather information, and to stir up faith in the outreach team and campus fellowship

Preparation:

1. Assemble a team of from two to a dozen or so trusted people. Choose from students, faculty, local church members, and staff. Have them begin praying for God's direction for the day, and for protection of the prayer team.
2. Reserve a room on campus where you will start and end the time. Chose a quiet space that is safe from interruptions, where you can sit and see each other. Plan for the event to last 2 to 4 hours.
3. On a small campus, let the Chaplain's Office or Dean of Student Life know what you are doing. They don't like to hear of your events second-hand, especially if a complaint is involved, and they may have some good suggestions, or just be encouraged by your commitment to pray.
4. Gather maps of the campus, campus publicity brochures, info from the college website, school newspapers, a list of Christians on campus with addresses – students, staff, faculty; and praying churches in the area; bring paper and pens for taking notes.
5. Enlist intercessors to pray for your team while you do the prayer walk.

Procedure:

1. **Meet in the gathering place.**
 - a. Introduce the team and explain the plan for the walk.
 - b. Worship together, with praise (songs, Scriptures, prayers of praise)
 - c. Read the story in Numbers 13; make observations, and discuss it.
 - d. Pray together for direction and power from the Holy Spirit.
2. **Go out in pairs or threes.**
 - a. Divide the group and assign locations on campus to each pair.

- b. Agree on a time to return. (Collect cell phone numbers, and stress the importance of returning on time, or phoning the leader if you are delayed.)
 - c. Each group walks around their area, praying, and asking God to show them what they need to know in order to pray strategically.
 - d. Places to look:
 - i. Bulletin boards
 - ii. Students (what are they doing, saying, wearing?)
 - iii. Chapel and religious life spaces
 - iv. Professors' office doors
 - v. Student center, dining halls
 - vi. Library; college archives-- for history of school
 - vii. Monuments, plaques and inscriptions on buildings
 - viii. Admissions office – for promotional materials
 - ix. Other key campus sites
3. **Record any indications of the spiritual life on campus.** Questions to ask:
- a. God, what do you want to show us? Where should we look?
 - b. What values were important to the founders of the school? What values are important today?
 - c. Is there a spiritual heritage that is well-known?
 - d. What is the reputation of the campus?
 - e. What jumps into your attention as you look around campus?
 - f. What is the center of campus life?
 - g. What values are advertised and promoted? Where and how?
 - h. If you were a student seeking spiritual understanding, where would you look, and what would you find?
4. **Re-assemble at the agreed time.**
- a. Open with a prayer for God's wisdom and spiritual insight.
 - b. Take a few minutes of silence with God, to gather your thoughts and insights.
 - c. Share your observations.
 - i. Recognize different ways of observing – with senses or by intuition; analytical or metaphorical; noticing details or big-picture; sounds, smells, images,
 - ii. Encourage each person to speak, whether they feel repetitious, or off-track.
 - iii. Invite different spiritual gifts – visions, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, discernment of spirits, hearing a relevant Scripture verse.
 - iv. Humbly admit we are not experts and will make mistakes in listening to God.
 - d. Look for patterns and group consensus about what God is showing you. Don't sweat the details; look for broad concepts you can agree on.
 - e. Agree on a list of specific prayer requests.
 - f. Take an extended time to pray together (or start in small groups, then together).
 - g. Closing prayer -- give God praise, and pray for protection as you leave. You may want to use the Lord's Prayer, as it includes both forms of prayer.
5. **Write up the list** and agree to continue to pray over the days and weeks ahead. Bring the list to a regular prayer meeting, and watch for answers to prayer.

Other themes for Prayer Walks

1. Timothy Prayer for all in Authority

Follow the format, above, but focus on the instructions in I Tim 2:1-6 – to pray for all in authority.

Additional Resources for Spiritual Formation and Prayer can be found at:

Gather

You may want to invite other campus Christian groups to join you for this time.

Together, read I Tim 2:1-6, and then think through who it is that holds authority on campus. Who has control or influence over the spiritual and social values on campus? Who can open and close doors for Christian witness? This may include the student government, the Greek system, athletes, deans, admissions officers, financial aid officers, health services, chaplains, or others.

Prayer Walk

Divide up the group as above, and go to the places where those influential people work or live. Pray that these campus leaders would open doors for Christians to live safely on campus and to be able to freely proclaim the gospel. I like to pray that Christians would "find favor" with these leaders, and that if they are hindering the Lord's work, that God would change their hearts, or remove them from power.

If the opportunity arises, talk to the campus leaders and tell them that you are praying for the campus today. You can ask, "Are there specific ways we can pray for you, or for your area of responsibility?" Or, "what do you think is the greatest need on campus?" Pray for them and their requests, if they invite you, and pray prayers of blessing on them (very briefly!) Ex: "Thank you, Lord, for Dean X. Please hear his prayer for safety on campus in the nighttime. Let your goodness and blessing fill his life today, and let him know your wisdom and love. In Jesus' name, Amen"

Regather for debrief and closing prayer, as above.

2. Jericho Walk

This kind of prayer walk is very popular, and involves walking around the whole campus boundary, seven times, (or 14 times!) and includes praise. For a description of one way to do this, check out <http://www.ipcnucsd.net>

Note: remember that God's command to Joshua, in this situation, was a one-time event, not a prescription or command for us. The devil knows that we cannot claim territory for the Lord that God is not giving to us! Any kind of walk on campus needs to be done respectfully and with permission from the duly appointed authorities. It is a very different thing to consecrate "holy space" such as a church building or a Christian conference center, and to pray for a secular campus. That is to say, be sure it is the Lord that is leading you, and not personal ego, as with King Saul in I Samuel 13.

3. Prayer Scavenger Hunt – a Large Group activity

Begin by gathering the group on one side of campus. After opening worship, etc., divide the group into pairs or triads, and give them 30 minutes to walk across campus and then meet at a second location. They should fan out, and look for things to pray for on campus. (See the list of places to look, in the first prayer walk.) If they meet people they know, they can ask if those people have prayer requests. (Feel free to pray with the friend at that time, if the Lord leads you. Keep it short!) Write down prayer requests, and meet the whole group on the far side of campus.

You can gather the requests in a number of ways: use newsprint to list requests, a basket for slips of paper, or do a creative activity: draw a picture of your request, using crayons on butcher paper. Note: be careful not to violate confidentiality, by making sure you have permission from any person who is named in a request, to share the request.

When everyone has returned, gather and share in small groups what the experience was like, and what prayer requests you collected – and then pray together.

You may want to write up the list of requests for participants to keep praying for the next week or month.

4. Solidarity Prayer Walk or Event

Additional Resources for Spiritual Formation and Prayer can be found at:

Plan a Prayer Walk to express solidarity around a Justice issue on campus. Work with Christian groups, chaplains and other campus leaders. Note: be careful not to make prayer a means to some other end. The purpose of prayer is to connect with Almighty God, humbly but confidently – to align ourselves with His heart and will. We have the right to come boldly to His throne, only because of the blood of Christ, shed for us.