

The purpose of a prayer walk is to express our love for our communities by lifting them before God in prayer. In faith we walk through the places we care about and speak God's blessing over them, asking God to establish his kingdom and to release hearts to respond to the good news of his saving love.

A prayer walk allows us to pray with our eyes open, attending to the people and places around us. A prayer walk invites us to listen to the promptings of the Spirit and to pray the prayers he lays on our hearts. A prayer walk is a visible sign of our commitment to serve others and our desire to be bearers of Christ's transforming presence in his world.



Whilst the underlying principles of a prayer walk might be the same, the ways in which we express them may differ. Each praying community will have its own character and gifts and these should be used in discerning the best way to prayer-walk your community.

The focus of the prayer walk is prayer. It might be sensible to brief those who join and to keep chatter to a minimum. Whilst conversation that supports prayer could be useful, make sure that prayer remains the focus. Certainly, feel free to engage with anyone you come across on your walk, either to listen, to pray or to share the good news with them.

Of course, we are all different, so there's no one-size-fits-all approach to prayer walking. Nevertheless, here are a few models you might want to consider when thinking through what might work best for you.

- **Simply walk** – plan a route and then walk it, perhaps pausing at key places to offer specific prayers. The intention here is to pray as you walk and to be sensitive to the what God might be saying to you as you pray. Do not be afraid to change your route if it feels right to do so – you might be surprised at what happens.
- **Key locations** – identify one or more places where you would really like to see God move. Perhaps walk around them or visit them if you are able. Pray for those places and the people who inhabit them and ask God to release his blessing over them. These places might include particular housing estates or streets, schools, workplaces, pubs, or places where communities gather. You might wish to pray with key figures in those places, or to pray blessings over them.

- **Singing** – praise is a powerful thing. You might want to sing over your community, maybe in a park or a town centre square. If there are areas or places that feel ‘dark’, singing God’s praises there could be a powerful thing to do.
- **Extended walk** – organise a longer walk with designated stopping points. This is a good way of covering a larger area and including multiple worshipping communities. Each stop might provide a place for more focussed prayer and worship, as well as time to rest, refresh, meet others and have something to eat.
- **Praying from the mountains** – find a local high place, maybe a hill or the top of a tower block or even a church tower. Pronounce blessings over all you can see and offer prayers for the community.
- **Symbols of blessing** – you might want to distribute gifts or signs of blessing to people you meet. These could be things like palm crosses or home-made cookies, flowers or prayer cards. This can be a good way to open up conversations with others.
- **Litter-picking** – organise a practical demonstration of your love for the people you serve such as litter-picking or tidying physical spaces. As you work, use the time to pray and to bless the people who live or work there. This is a great visible display of the love of Jesus who rolls up his sleeves to clear up our mess.



It is helpful to begin with a time of preparation, asking God to work through you as you walk. You might ask for opportunities to pray with people you meet or to minister the gospel. You could ask the Holy Spirit to direct your steps and to help you to see your neighbourhood as he sees it – he might have something new to show you! It is also wise to pray for protection because this is important work.

Please feel free to invite as many people to join the prayer walk as possible – this should not be restricted to a particular group within the church. It might be wise to get an idea though of who might be turning up so that provision for particular needs might be made. It would also be sensible to consider any potential safety issues, such as navigating busy or isolated places, as well as making sure no one gets lost or separated from others. You will know your areas and any potential risks you might face.

If you are planning a longer prayer walk, or are expecting a larger group of people, you might want to walk the route first to see how it might work out. It would also be sensible to make sure that someone is carrying a mobile phone in case of emergencies.

Please share your plans with our communications team comms@manchester.anglican.org and tag #Transformingprayercommunity on social media.

