

Prayer Matters

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Does it matter if I am not “Still” when I pray?

I don't think so.

When we think of prayer, most often we think of being still – standing, kneeling or sitting – while connecting with God. After all, doesn't Scripture say: “Be still and know that I am God”. (Psalm 46:10, [NRSV])? However, being still is not the only way we can pray. Some people do their best, and are most comfortable, praying while they are moving.

Can I pray while I am moving?

Yes. What I will call in this article “Prayer Walking” can be a wonderful gift for those who like to get up and move around while intentionally communicating with God. Prayer Walking can be done in any location at any time, sometimes alone, or with a group. Prayer Walking includes, but is not restricted to, traditional practices, such as: making a pilgrimage; walking the Stations of the Cross; and walking a labyrinth.

Intercessory Prayer Walking - praying for others while on the move - invites people to walk to a particular site of their concern such as: a church; an office; a school; government buildings; the neighbourhood; a residence; a hospital; and a hotel. The immediacy of the location, or the reason for going to the place, can fuel prayer and offer a way of listening more deeply to God, to what God's concerns for this place and the people in it, might be. Once at the site, prayers are offered while moving and/or while stopped for a short time at a particular place. For example, if Prayer Walking in a church, an individual or group might want to walk around the building, praying and stopping at specific locations to offer prayers particular to that location. (e.g. altar area; choir area; centre of the nave; church office; kitchen; meeting hall; Rector's office etc.)

When done in a group, prayer walking is a way of saturating a particular place and people with prayer. This discipline draws us out of prayers that are limited to our immediate concerns, and into a larger circle of God's loving attention.

Some suggestions for Prayer Walking for Adults:

1. Walk through your home or church in the company of Jesus. Pray for each room and what happens there. How would recognizing Jesus' presence reorient your interaction?
2. Spend some time walking with other believers through your work place. Pray for your colleagues, the custodial help, the customers, the delivery people, the kitchen staff, and the management. Offer yourself to be Jesus' hands and heart in this place.
3. Visit a playground and school near you. Walk through it in the company of Jesus. Pray for those who work, play and study there. How do you see the heart of God for this place?
4. When you are on vacation or in a natural setting, allow God to draw you into prayer for a particular place. Let your interaction with the created world lead you into prayer. Pray that the exquisite beauty of the world will not be snuffed out.
5. Before a neighbourhood picnic or school event, join other believers who will prayer walk for the crowds and people who will attend. Ask the Lord to give you His heart for them. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work even in this event.

Some suggestions for Prayer Walking for Children

1. Plan a route ahead of time. Make sure there are at least two adults in the group. Make a bathroom call before heading out.
2. If possible walk to: the school, hospital or nursing station, police station, fire station, store, nursing home, day care centre, playground, a family home and the final stop, outside the church before you head in again.
3. At each spot, stop, wait till the children are quiet, then ask the Holy Spirit to fill this place

with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...ask the children to name these "fruits of the spirit". (Galatians 5:22-23). With each spot they will begin to remember more & more of them.

4. Leave time for special prayer intentions the children might have. The teacher/leader might need to do the first stop or two, but the children will soon start coming up with some; e.g. that all the children try their best in school, that there is healthy food in the hospital, etc.

In thinking about Prayer Walking, you might want to consider the following questions:

- [What does it mean to you that God is in every place? How does this affect how you pray?
- [How does moving or being still affect the way you pray?
- [What most helps you concentrate on God? Is what helps you concentrate on God part of your regular prayer practice?
- [What is it like for you to pray, listening to God's heart for what a particular prayer might be?