



The Good Neighbor Project - Take a (Prayer) Walk

A step-by-step guide (see what we did there?) to help you pray for your neighbors and invite God to work in your neighborhood.

Prayer is a way for us to talk to a God who loves us. It's also a way for God to talk to us. Prayer changes things in our relationships, in our world, and in our hearts. Today we're going to ask God to start to change things in our neighborhoods in a conversation with him.

Jesus taught us how to pray. He prayed often. His friends took notice, and Matthew 6:9-13 gives Jesus' specific answer: a prayer called the "Our Father." We're going to use that prayer to help us pray for our neighbors today.

Some basic expectations. Being a good neighbor requires building strong relationships, and that happens over time. Doing this prayer walk is a great first step (literally), but it may take months or even years for you to truly know your neighbors.

Don't let interruptions frustrate you. We don't want to miss out on relationships with our neighbors because we're too busy praying for relationships with our neighbors! If someone wants you to stop and chat, consider that an immediate answer to your prayer.

Before You Start

What to wear: Comfy shoes are a must. Dress for the weather. You definitely won't have a great experience if you're limping home cold and wet.

What to bring: Print this page and bring it with you. Grab an empty plastic grocery bag and put it in your pocket.

Pro tips:

- As you walk, say hello to folks you see outside.
- To see a simple, immediate improvement, use your empty plastic bag to pick up trash as you go.
- Use the prompts below to have a conversation with God. Think of it like a conversation with an old friend. There's no need for fancy words or scripted prayers; just speak from the heart. Keep your eyes open or you might trip. Seriously.

Before you take your first step, talk to God. Tell Him that you're setting out on a prayer walk. Ask Him where you should walk. Ask Him to help you see your neighbors the way that He sees them. If you've never prayed out loud before, you might say something like this:

God, I'm about to walk around my neighborhood in order to pray for the people living near me. Are there any specific streets you'd like me to walk down or houses you'd like me to walk past? *[Leave some space here to see if any streets or houses or families come to mind]*. As I walk, please give me the eyes to see my neighbors the way that you see them. Help me to be a good neighbor. Amen.

Let's Do This

Go out into your neighborhood. As you pray through the steps below, keep your eyes open to people God may be putting in your path. Keep your plastic bag handy for trash.

In Matthew 6:9 Jesus says:

“This, then, is how you should pray:

‘Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name’

Start by saying hello to God. What do you know about Him? Have you experienced God as a Healer? A Comforter? An Artist? *As you walk, think about who God is and the good things he’s already done in you, in your relationships, and in your neighborhood.*

“your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Think about what it would look like if God’s Kingdom reigned on the street you’re on right now. *If you imagine something that’s good (not broken) or seems like something Jesus would approve of, you’re on the right track.* Ask God to show you His plan for your neighborhood: in marriages, friendships, schools, businesses, and parks.

“Give us today our daily bread.”

Ask God to show you the needs of your neighbors. Is there something that breaks your heart in your neighborhood? *If you feel like you can say it honestly, tell God that you’re ready to partner with Him to meet those needs.*

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

Ask God if there’s anything you’re holding in your heart against your neighbors. Didn’t get an invite to last year’s Christmas party? Are you still bitter about that techno dance party at 3:00am? Admit it to God. Ask Him for help with forgiveness.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

Ask God to show you anyone who is vulnerable or marginalized in your neighborhood. Ask God to protect them. How can you be a voice for them?

Well done. You just completed a prayer walk. Walk yourself back home, and then take time to reflect.

Reflect

Hopefully your walk helped you see your neighbors (and maybe yourself) in a new way. Take a few minutes right now to jot down your thoughts. Honesty is the goal here. What did it feel like to be walking and praying? Did God show you anything new on your walk? Is there anything God is asking you to do next?

Way to take a step forward (we’re just full of ‘em today). You just became part of the change we want to see in our neighborhoods and all across our city. Want to go to the next level? Commit to walking and praying regularly. Put a date on your calendar right now to do another prayer walk (or run or bike ride).