

There is so much uncertainty in our world today. It can feel overwhelming seeing all of the unmet needs in our community. Whether it's on behalf of our neighbors, church or friends, our response to those needs must be rooted in prayer.

Three principles to keep in mind as you're praying over ministry efforts are

1. Stop trying to take the lead.
2. Focus on aligning your plans with God's.
3. Learn the value of stillness.

When we set our goals in context with God's greater plan, we align with the Holy Spirit in serving our neighbors. Creating margin for being quiet in God's presence is one of the most important things a leader can do.

Prayer walking is an opportunity to utilize that stillness as an opportunity to listen to God while exploring communities in need. Some best practices for prayer walking alone or with a group of friends are as follows:

- Allow the Holy Spirit to guide your senses and ask, "What am I seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling and tasting in this moment"?
- Be intentional about dwelling on what God is already doing in this community and how He wants you to join.
- Keep in mind that the prayer walk is not merely a neighborhood tour or opportunity to evangelize; the purpose of the prayer walk is to draw near to God and His purposes.
- Ask how you can pray for the people you see to create a deeper sense of connection with the neighborhood.
- Make sure everyone on the prayer walk understands the concept and feels comfortable praying silently or sharing out loud as needed.
- Consider providing participants with a prayer guide that may include a map, prayers and questions to ponder.
- Allow participants to debrief after the prayer walk, sharing and processing their experiences.

While prayer walking is often a scheduled event, it really should be a consistent posture as we "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:16). Prayer provides an opportunity to hear what God is doing in the community and to ask those already living there what needs are going unmet on a consistent basis.

"How can I pray for you?" is a powerful question that can bring up needs in others that they didn't even know were burdening them, so take the opportunity to intercede for your neighbors during these prayer walks.