

Take the Name of Jesus With You: Prayerwalking

by Judy Garlow Wade

JEHOVAH SHAMMAH—THE LORD IS THERE

I like to think of prayerwalking as a mobile prayer meeting—where God supplies the audiovisuals! Pastor and author Ted Haggard defines prayerwalking as “walking through an area while interceding for that place” with the aim of improving our communities. He goes on to point out the benefits of walking while praying. “Praying while walking makes prayer purposeful, informed and stimulating. Moving about keeps your mind from wandering.” As God’s people, we have been given the awesome privilege and responsibility of interceding for our world. **As we prayerwalk, we can change the world for the better.**

The idea of prayerwalking is really nothing new. It has a solid precedent in Scripture. Deuteronomy 11:22–25 reads: *If you carefully observe all these commands I am giving you to follow—to love the Lord our God, to walk in all His ways and to hold fast to Him—then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and stronger than you. **Every place where you set your foot will be yours...** No man will be able to stand against you. The LORD your God, as he promised you, will put the terror and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go* (emphasis added).

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT PRAYERWALKING

I’ve noticed that beginning prayerwalkers often ask similar questions. There are initial hurdles they must clear before they feel comfortable trying this kind of ministry. Some wonder if they really are intercessors. Others are intimidated by the idea of praying in a small group of believers, let alone in a public place. A few wonder if they “have what it takes” spiritually to confront the problems in their community head-on, or if they’ll know what to do when they prayerwalk.

I believe that **every Christian can be a prayerwalker**, regardless of his or her primary spiritual gifts. This is something you *can* do. Having answers to some basic questions about prayerwalking may give you the confidence to begin.

Am I an Intercessor?

While God commands all Christians to pray regularly, some believers seem especially gifted at praying effectively.

These are called *intercessors*. To intercede is simply to plead on behalf of another. I like my husband’s definition of intercession. Keat says, “For the intercessor, intercession is a condition of the heart. Prayer is a first response.”

While some people are especially gifted to pray effectively, **all Christians can and should pray**. When you prayerwalk, you will do the task of intercession, and God will bless your efforts. Your prayers will add weight to those of many fine believers who have prayed over the same territory, perhaps for many years. One day, God will give a breakthrough.

Is Prayerwalking Intimidating?

I’ve found that prayerwalking is best done somewhat anonymously. Generally, I don’t want anyone to know that I am praying when I prayerwalk in public places. This is not because I’m afraid or trying to hide something, but because I want perfect freedom to listen to the Father, do what I need to do, and walk where I need to walk. I aim to look nonchalant, casual. Often I take along a camera or similar prop that provides a logical explanation for strolling or standing in an area. **Anonymity provides greater freedom.** Also, if I inadvertently do something that calls attention to myself, God will not be dishonored.

It’s a good idea to prayerwalk with more experienced intercessors, if possible. You’ll learn from them and gain confidence. We can learn from every experience, even from prayer times that seem like failures. Our hearts are changed each time we prayerwalk, and, with experience, we learn to sense God’s heart more clearly.

Am I Adequate for This Task?

As believers, we often fail to understand the authority that we have in Christ, and because of this we don’t exercise our power. We are unsure of ourselves. I know I was. I could identify others who had spiritual authority, but I questioned whether that could be true of me. It helped me to understand some of what the Bible teaches about spiritual authority.

We have the authority to prayerwalk because **we are in Christ and He has sent us into the world**. As a beginner you can stand on your positional authority while you prayerwalk in public places. For example, if you prayer-

walk at a Christian event on public property, you have authority in that place because of your relationship to Christ. That means that your prayers can clear the atmosphere as you pray for the success of the meeting; the enemy has to leave. Positional authority says “My God is bigger than the one you serve.”

God graciously bestows an added measure of spiritual authority on some people. You may have noticed, for instance, that some Christians seem particularly gifted to pray about certain things, like healing. God has imparted authority to them. Sometimes, just by being around people who have this imparted authority, we can learn to pray more effectively in their area of giftedness. As you discover areas in which God has given authority, you will become more confident to prayerwalk within your area of giftedness.

We gain spiritual authority by walking in obedience to God. **As we grow in obedience, we gain credibility with Him and are given increased spiritual responsibility as a result.** As we live righteously, we gain increased spiritual authority.

The New Testament emphasizes that personal righteousness is a powerful weapon against evil. For instance, Romans 12:21 says, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” That thought is reiterated in 2 Cor. 6:7, where we are to walk “in truthful speech and in the power of God with *weapons* of righteousness in the right hand and in the left” (emphasis added). Romans 13:12 expands on this thought: “The night is nearly over, the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on *the armor of light*” (emphasis added). The Greek word used here for *armor* means *weapon*. Arthur Burk explains, “Light is a weapon that we use against darkness. When you walk into a room, you don’t try to strangle darkness. You don’t beat it with a club. You don’t hang it from a tree with a rope. You bring light in and light overcomes the darkness... Righteousness is an offensive weapon that will bring us spiritual victory.”

How does this apply to prayerwalking? First, it means that we must keep ourselves in a close relationship with God. If we’re not living in obedience to Christ, our prayerwalking is merely exercise. Obedience enables us to pray effectively.

Second, as we observe the sins and problems in our communities, we remember that those problems are really symptoms of the real problem—unseen demonic powers. Our battle is not against people, but against the demonic forces. But the power of a righteous life puts us in a position to combat the spiritual forces of darkness with light.

So as a believer, you do have the spiritual “credentials”

to do this type of ministry. Just be sure that you continue living in obedience to the Lord.

How Will I Know What to Do?

You’ll want to begin by preparing your heart for each prayerwalking experience. Spending time in prayer, self-examination, and Scripture study are simple things you can do to prepare. As you seek God in these ways, the issues that you face and the best prayerwalking response will become clear to you.

One simple strategy for beginning prayerwalking is what I call going in the *opposite spirit*. Here’s how it works. Everything has an opposite, and that’s true of each virtue and vice as well. For instance, love is the opposite of hatred, self-control is the opposite of self-indulgence, and sharing is the opposite of stealing. **A simple way to attack the spiritual issue that underlies a community problem is by prayerwalking in the opposite spirit.** For example, if you prayerwalk at a public meeting that is likely to be contentious, go in the spirit of peace. When you prayerwalk at a church that has experienced defeat, go in a spirit of joy. Where there is fear, prepare your heart to go in a spirit of faith.

As you gain experience and learn more about prayerwalking, you will gain confidence. Ultimately, however, your strategy will come from God. He will give you direction for each prayerwalk. You’ll know what to do.

ARE YOU READY TO CHANGE YOUR WORLD?

Prayerwalkers are not super-Christians. They’re people who believe that God has the power to change their communities, their cities, their nation, and they believe that their prayers can make a difference. There are a lot of things that might discourage you from prayerwalking, but there’s one overwhelming reason to do it: God responds to our prayers of faith.

Think of the places that you go each day or each week: a busy street, a bustling office, a sports stadium, a school board meeting, a hospital, a bank, a park, a Laundromat. Now **imagine those same places transformed by the power of God.** Imagine your community, your town, your city remade by His Spirit.

Can you see it?

Praying on site for your community will increase your awareness of the spiritual need, strengthen your faith in God’s power to transform the world, and fill you with hope for people, places, and institutions that now seem beyond hope. **Your prayers can make a difference.**

Are you ready to change your world?