

Summer

prayers on the move

AIM

This material aims to provide some suggestions for praying on the move; places you can go to, people you might meet, situations you can explore, with prayer.

Let me tell you

In 2003 for his sabbatical Bob Warwicker walked from Lands End to John O'Groats on a journey called 'End to End via the Margins'. You can find the record of his walk at www.bobjanet.demon.co.uk/lejog

Bob was then a workplace chaplain with the South Yorkshire Workplace Chaplaincy. Each day on his walk Bob would meet people, sometimes planned, sometimes unplanned, and ask them where they saw God at work in the economic changes that were going on around them. He would write about this in his diary, he would take photographs and he would pray.

Now seven years later we still draw on this journey each spring as we look for signs of God at work in the changes happening around us, now in Huddersfield rather than Sheffield, and as we meet people, planned and unplanned, take photographs and pray wherever we are.

Let me tell you

On the way back from a local walk we were coming into Huddersfield via the old industrial quarter where old mills have been turned into other businesses, cafes and nightclubs alongside engineering and storage, when we saw a young man patrolling a car park. Bob stopped to talk to him. 'A bit of a boring job eh?' He began. 'Ye boring' he said 'but it'll get me through college this summer. I finish in July and what I earn here will help me make it to the end of the course'. I moved away to sit on the wall as he and Bob talked a bit more, watching them both, knowing that this was the part of the job that Bob liked the best. From his old days as workplace chaplain in steelworks in Sheffield to the car parks of Huddersfield he liked to loiter with intent and hear about people's working lives. This would inform his leading of worship and his praying in the week to come.

INTRODUCTION

Prayer is not only something to do in one fixed position. If you can move about then you might like to try doing it on the move too. This may take some ingenuity to make it fully accessible: a wheelchair walk or a journey on a bus if you have limited mobility or maybe a video walk taken by someone else that you can view later. But the idea is to pray about the local world as we find it, as it really is, not as we imagine it might be or it was the last time we looked. It is to take the risk of stepping out and stepping into relationships with others and with God that are based on these here and now encounters. Remember to do this safely and in the company of other people if that helps.

PRAYER ON THE MOVE

If you are thinking of doing this you may want to meet with a small group of people to plan the activity. Try to include folks who have an interest in this in some way rather than 'just the usual suspects'. The group should be diverse as possible in age and ability so that it can plan from different perspectives. Think about your local area. Have a map to inform your thinking and your prayer. Where should we go? Perhaps a landmark, a particular part of the town or city or village, the area around your church or where you are hoping to plant a new church. Any where can be a place for prayer on the move. There

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may be a tradition of particular places visited like the Good Friday walk that Waverly Huddersfield make to Castle Hill every year for a service of witness. It has been going on for at least 50 years. Or maybe you always walk at a certain time of year like the 10 mile walk that Flockton URC make every May. Or perhaps you think a particular place should be visited for pastoral support, perhaps a place of local tragedy or loss. Or maybe you'd just like to walk and see what happens. Many faith groups have a story of walking and praying for different reasons.

If you do not often go walking remember to

- plan well in advance;
- decide what to do about bad weather;
- be considerate to others by using the country code or other appropriate resources;
- be appropriately equipped.

A successful short walk probably feels better than an uncompleted long one.

1. AN URBAN ADVENTURE

Such a walk might help you to see an urban area in a new way. It might also be the sort of thing you could do on a bus, by bike or in a wheelchair if the route was planned with these forms of transport in mind.

2. A PLACE WITH A VIEW

A walk to a local landmark or viewpoint can also provide a new perspective on your place. Looking down on a place can give us a 'bird's eye view'.

3. A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

This might vary from a walk in the woods to a longer trek that involves planning overnight stays. Walking is very popular and a good way to encourage those for whom traditional church might be less attractive. It can combine physical, mental and spiritual health.

Prayer

This prayer for Huddersfield, by Bob Warwicker, can easily be adapted for any place by inserting a different name in the first and last line:

God bless Huddersfield.

Guide its people and keep them safe.

Where there is stress, bring healing.

Where there is enmity, bring peace.

Where jobs are in danger, bring security.

Where people work too hard, bring rest.

Let your faith fill this town,

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Let your hope inspire this town,

Let your love enfold this town.

God bless Huddersfield.

Resources

The Ramblers Association, which is 75 this year, has a website of resources about walking at

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/>

Please send in any suggestions of walks that may be used by others or resources you can suggest.

EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

THE NEXT STEP

Please send in any information and ideas you have about local walks and praying on the move so that we can share it with others. If you want more Summer items please revisit the website.

Acknowledgements

This material is by Bob Warwicker and Janet Lees to whom copyright belongs and who have given permission for it to be used in the Vision4life process.

HOW TO FEEDBACK TO VISION4LIFE?

If you wish to offer any feedback – brickbats and bouquets are equally welcome! – you can do so in various ways.

You can email the Vision4Life steering group about general or website V4L issues via the website or at admin@vision4life.org.uk

If you have comments and particularly contributions to the prayer year, you can email the V4L prayer year coordinator via prayer@vision4life.org.uk

If you want to make contributions or ask questions about other V4L years you can email:

Year 3 – Transformed for Evangelism: evangelism@vision4life.org.uk