



THY KINGDOM COME

Prayer Journeying

Introduction & Practice Outline





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PRAYER JOURNEYING

INTRODUCTION

◆ Background

Prayer Journeying, or prayer walking as it is often called, takes us out of our church buildings and into our streets, parks and estates. It is a form of prayer with deep history; by it people have encountered the wonder of God in a specific place, prayed for protection and healing, spread the good news of the Gospel, and engaged in pilgrimage. It is a practice that spans different Anglican traditions, including pilgrimages, Rogation Sunday 'beating the bounds' and Palm Sunday processions.

◆ Summary of the Practice

Prayer Journeying involves praying in and for our neighbourhoods by having a conversation with God about what we notice as we journey. It is a prayer of our whole being. Our prayer may involve words, thoughts or feelings in our hearts as we converse with God.

We bring our knowledge of scripture and the local area into our prayer.

We ask God to unlock our imagination to discover what *Thy Kingdom Come* might look like 'here and now'. This gives shape to our prayer.

The focus is not on a specific destination; it is in the journey itself that we find meaning and a new way of understanding. We set out in trust, are attentive to encounters along the way and bring a sense of wonder to the environment through which we travel.

Prayer Journeying often leads to greater engagement with our communities. It may be through conversations we have with people we meet, or by God prompting us about the possibilities of responding to local needs, or simply through God's love for our neighbours, our community and ourselves being renewed.

Being prayerfully present helps us become aware of and recognise God's presence in the places around us, while also leaving footprints of blessing, goodness and mercy behind us.

◆ Ways to use the Practice

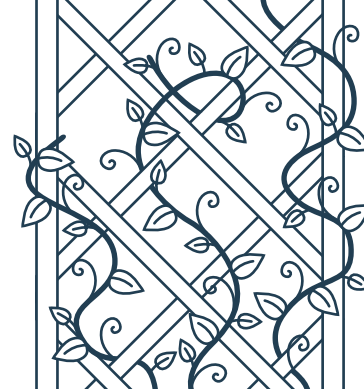
This practice could easily be integrated in our already existing routines, e.g. the school drop off, our daily commute or another regular journey we take.

It is also a great practice to do with others. If meeting as a group, the journey could be started and finished with a communal time of prayer. For the journey itself, following the example of Jesus and his disciples, going out in pairs will give everyone involved plenty of space to pray and discern.

It is important to be aware of the different sensory abilities and perspectives in any group. We might want to consider a virtual opportunity, e.g. live streaming a prayer journey for those who cannot physically take part.



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OUTLINE

1 Plan

If your prayer journey is not part of one of your regular journeys, think about where you might go. Are there specific places you would like to include? For instance: significant buildings like a local school, health centre, or church, places with clear needs, places of beauty like a local park, or services like foodbanks and community groups.

2 Prepare

Take time to prepare your heart and become aware of God's love for you. You may use a specific prayer practice, or use a worship song or hymn to centre your attention upon Jesus. Ask for help to recognise God's presence as you go out.

3 Journey

As you journey, the following steps might be helpful:

STAY:

Take time to be present and listen. Become aware of your own breathing and allow the journey to become an expression of prayer with your whole body, as you journey with God and respond to your environment. Become aware of anything you are drawn to and consider how you could respond to that prayerfully. **Where is God and what are you noticing in your locality?**

SHARE:

Share your insights with each other, to build up a bigger picture of the local area and what God is doing. Don't worry about interruptions. Many a prayer journey has been interrupted by conversations that have provided opportunities to engage with people, receive and learn from them

and share about the good news of Jesus. Be open to change where you go and what you pray for as you sense the Spirit's leading. **As you journey the streets, what do you sense, notice, feel, wonder?**

SERVE:

What are the prayers and actions that are emerging from this time? What does *Thy Kingdom Come* look like 'here and now'? How might you embody this? For example, if a specific place feels 'unsafe', pray for an increase in safety for all, if it looks 'unclean', you might feel stirred to spring into action and organise a litter pick.

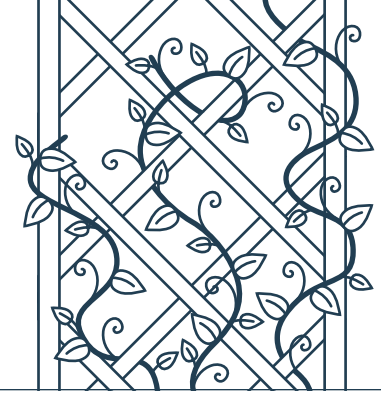
4 Reflect

Record your experience in some way - make a journal or record a voice message, draw a picture, or think of a prayer that sums up the experience. If you have gone as part of a group, share stories, thank God and debrief together. Consider whether there were any repeated themes or prayers from different groups. If there are issues that need more prayer or specific actions, you might plan to return.

Finally, prayer brings change, both to yourself as well as to your surroundings, so expect and look for responses to your prayers. It may be a scheme to bring people in the community together, a news report or a minor detail that can be an encouragement for you in your prayer. You might also notice yourself becoming more present and aware to the people you share your locality with. Thank God for the answers to prayer.



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◆ Questions for Reflection

- How did you respond to the Prayer Journeying practice? What was helpful? What was not so helpful?
- How might you use and develop this practice in your everyday life?
- How might this practice be used within your church community?

◆ Resources from different Christian traditions

Books

- *Landscapes of Prayer: Finding God in the World and Your Life*
Margaret Silf (Lion Books, 2011)
- *Letters from Nazareth: A Contemplative Journey Home*
Richard Carter (Canterbury Press, July 2023)
- *Prayer Walking: Praying on-Site with Insight*
Steve Howthorne and Graham Kendrick (Charisma House, 2001)
- *The Soul of a Pilgrim: Eight Practices for the Journey Within*
Christine Valters Paintner (Sorin Books, 2015)

Online (Apps and Websites)

- *Neighbourhood Pilgrimage*, Fiona Koefoed-Jespersen, OrdinaryPilgrim.co.uk: a guided pilgrimage through your own neighbourhood. Listen to this meditation as you walk around your area, to see it with new eyes, and look for the sacred in the ordinary.
<https://soundcloud.com/fiona-koefoed-jespersen/neighbourhood-pilgrimage>
- *Walking with God, Pray As You Go*, Jesuit Media Initiatives: a 40-minute audio prayer guide designed to accompany you as you go out for a walk.
<https://pray-as-you-go.org/series/20-walking-with-god>

Visit www.wayoflife.london to access more prayer resources.

The creation of this resource was a partnership between the Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication and the London Diocese Confident Disciples Team.



We would very much appreciate your feedback on this practice.
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