

Neighborhood Prayer and Observational Walk

The purpose of this activity is to generate a fresh, first-hand impression of the neighborhood around the church. Have every member of the planning team spend an hour walking in the community.

Procedures

1. You should select a day when all members of your planning team will go out into the immediate neighborhood around the church.
2. Place yourselves in pairs and assign each pair a small section of the neighborhood that they will observe for one hour as they walk along. Everyone should have a notebook.
3. As you are walking, ask yourself:
 - What would Jesus see, hear, notice and experience?***
 - What would break his heart?***
 - What burden is Jesus calling the church to bear in the mission field?***
4. Consider the following as you walk:
 - a) **People** (what ages, sexes, races; in what activities at what times and places; languages and accents heard; etc.)
 - b) **Land-use patterns** (single-unit residences, row houses, detached and semi-detached, multi-unit residences, stores, public services, educational, industrial, etc.)
 - c) **Condition of properties** (signs of deterioration, repair, decoration, etc.)
 - d) **Condition of streets** (how wide, how heavily traveled, how clean, etc.)
 - e) If you have lived in the area for a while or have attended the church for a while, ask yourself **what has changed** since you first started to visit the community.
 - f) If you are new to the community, ask **yourself what is surprising** to you on your walk.
 - g) What are you seeing on your walk that would **not be noticeable or significant** if you were traveling through this area by car?
5. Along the way, stop and take time with your partner to pray for the people that live in and travel through your neighborhood.
6. Return to the church and write down as a group the learnings and observations from the walk.
7. Review the list of learnings and offer some guesses about the significance of your observations for the future ministry of your church. How is your church like or unlike your neighborhood? How is your heart being pulled by experiencing your church's neighborhood through Jesus' eyes?
8. Send your completed report to your facilitator and all the team members.

Adapted From *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations* (p. 271) and *10 Prescriptions for a Healthy Church* (pp. 8-9)



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What would Jesus see, hear, notice and experience?

PRAYERS

What would break his heart?

What burden is Jesus calling the church to bear in the mission field?

People

(what ages, sexes, races; in what activities at what times and places; languages and accents heard; etc.)

Land-use patterns

- single-unit residences
- row houses
- detached and semi-detached
- multi-unit residences
- stores
- public services
- educational
- industrial
- other

Condition of properties

(signs of deterioration, repair, decoration, etc.)

Condition of streets

(how wide, how heavily traveled, how clean, etc.)

If you have lived in the area for a while or have attended the church for a while, ask yourself **what has changed** since you first started to visit the community.

If you are new to the community, ask **yourself what is surprising** to you on your walk.

What are you seeing on your walk that would **not be noticeable or significant** if you were traveling through this area by car?

REVIEW: *How is your church like or unlike your neighborhood? How is your heart being pulled by experiencing your church's neighborhood through Jesus' eyes?*

Arkansas Conference Trajectory

Creating vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ,
who make disciples equipped to transform lives, communities and the world.