

Prayerwalkers appeal to God to take back community

February 5, 2007

Posted: 2/02/07



Participants in a recent DiscipleNow weekend at Shiloh Terrace Baptist Church held the congregation's first prayerwalk through the neighborhood near the church. The group prayed for schools, medical facilities and other churches.

More prayerwalks and outreaches are planned to help "change the spiritual climate" of the neighborhood, said David Balyeat, interim minister for missions.

Prayerwalkers appeal to God to take back community

By Laura Lacey Johnson

Special to the Baptist Standard

A new government program is bringing positive change to a crime-laced neighborhood not far from [Shiloh Terrace Baptist Church in Dallas](#). But church members determined to take back their community have appealed to a higher authority—by prayerwalking.

“The idea is to heighten the level of consciousness about the condition of the neighborhood and get the congregation more involved in praying for the spiritual climate to make the changes from the government program more viable,” said David Balyeat, interim minister for missions at Shiloh Terrace.

**Prayerwalking
participants offer
practical advice:**

*Read books about prayer
so you have a framework
from which to pray.*

— **David Lowrie, pastor
of First Baptist Church
of Canyon**

*Ask God to give you a
vision of what he wants
for the area.*

— **David Balyeat,
interim minister of
missions at Shiloh
Terrace Baptist
Church in Dallas**

*Be “confessed up and
prayed up” to help
combat spiritual warfare.*

— **Texas Baptist
missionaries to North
Africa**

*If planning a group
prayerwalk, seek God’s
choice of the team
members and look for
people with “a heart for
prayer.”*

— **Steve Hawthorne and
Graham Kendrick,
authors**

Shiloh Terrace held its first prayerwalk during a recent DiscipleNow weekend and targeted specific areas to “till the land” and identify places where the church can minister, he explained.

The church has planned additional prayerwalks, and participants hope to see the high crime rate—more than 1,500 offenses during 2006—decrease, Balyeat explained.

“At the end of the year, the police will provide statistics to see the effect of the spiritual” involvement, he said. “We will see change. God desires change.”

In their 1993 book, *Prayerwalking*, authors Steve Hawthorne and Graham Kendrick define the practice as “praying on-site with insight.”

“On-site praying is simply praying in the very places where you expect your prayers to be answered,” they wrote.

Hawthorne and Kendrick insist insight comes in three forms—responsive, researched and revealed. That is, prayerwalkers formulate prayers by using what they see during the experience, what they learn about the area from research beforehand and what they discern from the Holy Spirit.

“Lives are forever changed,” said a Texas Baptist missionary couple who recruit Christians to prayerwalk with them through a busy market in a mountainous region of North Africa.

“Even though we told them how to pray at home, they never understood until going and seeing for themselves,” the missionaries said.

David Lowrie, pastor of [First Baptist Church of Canyon](#), recently participated in two prayerwalks in Asia to help develop what he called “new streams” of ministry opportunities where four of the church’s missionaries are serving.

“We drive so much these days,” he said. “There is something about walking. You don’t see as much when you drive. You become much more aware when walking than you could be even if you were driving slowly.

“Jesus walked everywhere he went. That may be part of the key to so many of the stories we read about in the Bible. Jesus was walking by people, not driving by.”

See Related Articles:

- [PRAY WITHOUT CEASING: Intercession aside, do Baptists have a prayer?](#)
- Prayerwalkers appeal to God to take back community
- [UMHB students put feet to their prayers in the streets of Tokyo](#)

Distractions can abound for prayerwalkers.

“You have to discipline yourself so you are not just taking a walk,” Lowrie observed.

Hawthorne and Kendrick maintain one way to do this is by writing down Scripture passages ahead of time and referring to them on the prayerwalk, praying them in your own words.

In addition, it is important to remain focused, especially when immersed in and praying for a culture other than your own.

Members of the North African prayer teams have said they experienced “sensory overload” due to the unique activities found in the locations of the

prayerwalks.

“The market is noisy with the hawkers,” the missionaries to North Africa noted.

“It is dirty compared to our grocery stores, with sheep and cows being slaughtered in open-air areas, teeth being pulled under a tent ... and of course, the smells.”

Prayerwalkers may not immediately see the impact of their efforts, participants noted.

“One hundred years from now, when we are in heaven, it will be interesting to see if anyone we prayed for made it” to heaven, Lowrie said. “Prayer-walking may actually be a prelude to long-term intercession for a specific group of people.”

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Baptist churches, in Texas, the BGCT, the nation and around the world.