

Taster Prayer Walk 1 – Self-guided information

Distance: c1km

Details: Walk slowly around St Thomas Churchyard and the pleasure ground, with stops by benches for rest.

Time: Less than 1 hour including optional discussion at the end if in a pair or group.

- ♥ Walk to a tree in the Churchyard and think about how wonderful trees are to help us breathe. How can we give thanks and have greater appreciation for creation today? Take a photo of anything that stands out.
- ♥ Listen out for the sounds around the tree - the wind blowing through the leaves, the birds singing and people and cars in the area. What thoughts does this bring to mind?
- ♥ Walk to a free park bench in the Graveyard - think of all the different people who have sat on this bench and take a photo of it if you would like to. Pray for and/or reflect on the people who have sat there or will sit there today.

- ♥ Walk over to St Thomas Pleasure Ground - walk calmly and with curiosity. Pause at the St Thomas Community Garden and think about food, where it comes from or the season we're in and how it impacts what we eat. Use your senses to reflect on the colours, smells and sounds around this area. Pray for and/or reflect on the volunteers in this place, and give thanks for the time and energy they are giving to the community.
- ♥ Observe the everyday life around—of dogwalkers, play, relaxation, and say thank you.



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"Be still and know that I am God"
Psalm 46. 10

Guide to Meditative Prayerful Walks

What is a meditative/prayer walk?

A meditative walk, usually outdoors, has pauses or waystations for reflection or engagement with an idea or activity. It is based on a Christian tradition of time to listen to God, to pray (aloud or silently) and to reflect on yourself and the community and world around you. A definition often used by Christians is "pray on-site for insight".

Preparation for a meditative/prayer walk

- Try to have some space to yourself before you start the walk rather than rushing straight into it from another activity.
- If possible, spend some time getting yourself mentally, emotionally and/or spiritually ready for the walk in the best way that will help you e.g. silence, listening to music, reading the Bible or praying to God for guidance on the walk.

You might want to decide on a focus before you walk e.g. something that has resonated with you that week or for Christian this might be using a particular Bible verse.

Examples of different types of meditative/prayer walking

- Go for a wander without a destination and see what unfolds - be influenced by what you come across in how you spend your time.
- Focus consciously on all or any of your five senses as you walk, as well as using your imagination - this might help you reflect on the world, your local community or on yourself .

- Go for a nature walk e.g. in a wood, park, by a river or by the coast and focus on gratitude for creation or notice what nature can reveal to you.
- Go for a walk taking photos of things that stand out for you and use these for meditation or prayer across the week whether for change in the world, in your community or in yourself.
- Plan your route around local historic buildings and reflect on how the history of the place can help you reflect on justice issues for today.
- Plan your route around local schools, community centres, churches, cafés, pubs, or any significant places to you - this might help you think about your neighbours, family or friends in a different way, and a new way for you to listen.
- You might want to go on a reverse prayer walk and sit still in one place, on a bench or at a café, and reflect on the people and things that pass by.
- You might want to stay at home but go on an imaginative walk in your mind – thinking of the places above.

Time after your walk

It is a great idea to spend some time reflecting on your walk. You might want to:

- make some written notes
- draw something in response
- write something creative like a poem
- craft something
- have a discussion with someone
- look up a particular Bible verse, reading or line of poetry that you remembered during the walk and then use it throughout the week.

