

## Street Retreat - Community Walk

The purpose of this exercise is generate fresh first-hand insights into the community context in which the church ministers. Have every member of the planning group gather together for a whole Saturday morning. Ask them to bring walking shoes and a jacket if the weather is cool. They may want to bring a small pocket size note pad each. Arrange lunch for when the group regathers.

Process:

1. Gather around 9.00am for prayer and a briefing.
2. Divide the group into pairs and assign the pairs to one of two tasks
  - a) ½ the pairs go to the local shopping area closest to the church and find a place to sit and have coffee for an hour.
    - These pairs observe people who pass (ages, gender, race, activities, languages)
    - Events that occur around them (Especially anything unexpected)
    - Impressions of the 'feel' of the local community centre
  - b) ½ the pairs walk for an hour around the local community (divide the community up with different walking routes on a map using google maps to print a ~3 km walk). Ask the walking groups to observe:
    - People (ages, gender, race, activities, languages)
    - Housing, industry and land use (types of residences, shops, services, schools, businesses, industries, community facilities)
    - Condition of the neighbourhood (care taken with the appearance of properties, local environment, litter, condition of properties)
    - If group members have lived in the area for a number of years – what has changed?
    - If group members are relatively new – what is interesting or surprising
    - What might you not have noticed if you were travelling through by car
3. Gather the groups together after the hour for 40mins of refreshments and a general unstructured chat about observations.
4. Reassign pairs to the other task and redivide the pairs so that each is with a new partner on the task. Give them a second hour to make further observations.
5. Some pairs are comfortable to include praying for residents, shopkeepers, passers-by etc in their conversation as they walk. This is welcome as long as time is also taken to observe and reflect as they walk.
6. All return to the church and share together their key observations about the nature of the neighbourhood community. Document the shared or significant observations made.
7. Reflect together on the significance of these observations for the future ministry of the church in the community.
8. Conclude the morning with a light lunch.