

FROM THE STEEPLE TO THE STREETS

MARCH 3-9, 2019

14 PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR STEEPLE TO THE STREETS

#PRAYINTHESTREETS

1. Form a team of people in your church who are eager to connect with your neighbors and identify new ways to bring the church to the people. Ask them to join you for "Steeple to the Streets," when you will pray, observe, and encounter your community.
2. Identify a "person of peace" in your neighborhood, who can give you access to their relational network and help bridge the gap between your church and your surrounding community. Invite your person of peace to help your team plan ways to pray, observe, and encounter your community during "Steeple to the Streets."
3. Gather a team to help you make a list of "third places" in your community, which are places that people gather for social interaction outside of their homes ("first place") and workplaces ("second place"). Choose one (or more) of these third places to pray, observe, and encounter during "Steeple to the Streets."
4. Gather a team to help you make a "People Map" of the community surrounding your church, which means drawing a literal map around your church of wherever significant groups of people live, work, play, learn, gather, shop, etc. Use the map to develop a plan to pray, observe, and encounter your neighbors during "Steeple to the Streets."
5. If you have people who are limited in their mobility, gather them at church to pray for the ones who will be going out into the community during "Steeple to the Streets."
6. On Sunday, March 3, set aside time during the worship service to pray for the Holy Spirit's direction during "Steeple to the Streets" week. If a team has been formed, invite the congregation to gather around them and pray for them.
7. Send people out in small groups for "prayer walks" in the neighborhood around the church, or in other third places that you have identified. As you walk, try to listen for what God might be saying.
8. Send people out to do "recon work" in the neighborhood, by making observations about the community: who lives there, where do they work, what's important to them, how do they spend their free time, etc. Ask each other, "What is God showing us?"
9. As you go into the neighborhood to pray and make observations, be ready for any unexpected encounters with your neighbors, by smiling, making eye contact, and engaging them in loving conversation, simply to make a connection. This is not the time for trying to get someone to come to your church; this is a time for getting your church to go to your community!
10. Remember to capture all of the observations, "glory sightings," and Holy Spirit nudges your team experiences as they pray, observe, and encounter the community. Schedule a follow-up gathering with your team to pray, trade notes, and discern the ministry opportunities and possibilities that seem to have the most energy and potential.
11. Gather a team to bring with you to the Fresh Expressions Vision Day, on April 6 at Mandarin UMC.
12. Remember to invite the youth and children of your church to help pray, observe, and encounter your neighbors. Listen to their ideas, and encourage them to help lead the way.
13. Consider moving a normal church activity to an off-campus "third place" just for "Steeple to the Streets" week. For example, a men's breakfast could gather at a local cafe instead of the church fellowship hall, a Bible study could reserve a library community room or a hospital chapel, or a midweek dinner could be a cookout in a public park pavilion (or the church's front yard!).
14. Encourage people to pray, observe, and encounter the community, even if they are unable to be a part of your Steeple to the Streets team. Make handouts available to the whole congregation where they can record their observations and encounters with neighbors, and bring them back to church on March 10.