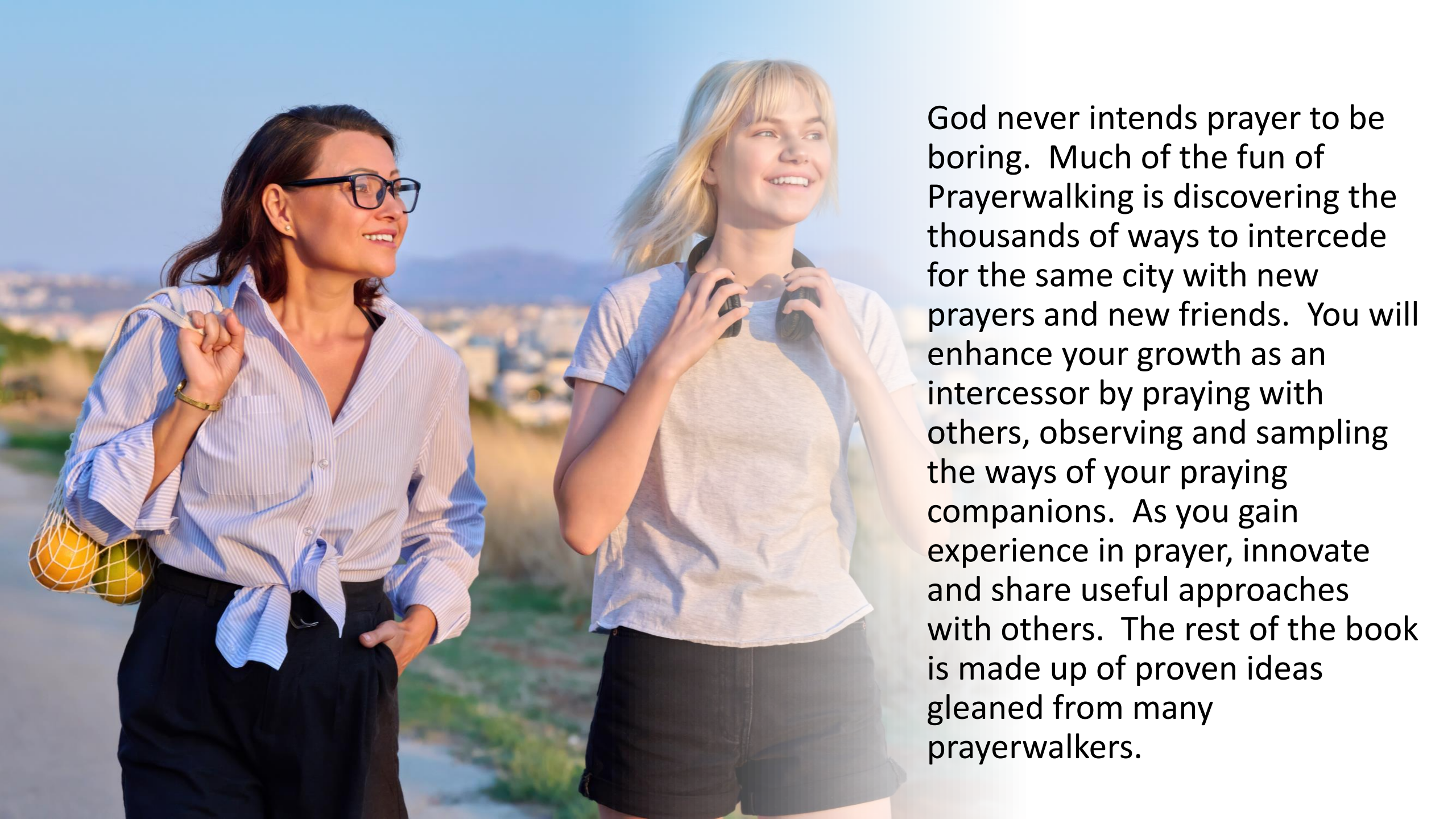




# Ways to Walk Together

Prayer Walking Chapter 8



God never intends prayer to be boring. Much of the fun of Prayerwalking is discovering the thousands of ways to intercede for the same city with new prayers and new friends. You will enhance your growth as an intercessor by praying with others, observing and sampling the ways of your praying companions. As you gain experience in prayer, innovate and share useful approaches with others. The rest of the book is made up of proven ideas gleaned from many prayerwalkers.

# Ways to Walk in Prayer Teams

The greatest joys and toughest challenges of Prayerwalking are found in walking together in teams of every kind.

## ***Team Idea #1: Prayerwalking Alone***

Christians have long practiced solitary devotional walks to meditate and pray. Perhaps these private walks with God could be termed *Enoch walks*, after the biblical character Enoch, who “walked with God; and he was not, for God took him” (Gen. 65:22). As much as we encourage personal devotional prayer while walking, we think it’s helpful to differentiate walks alone with God from walks which bring us interceding through our communities. It may appear to be an artificial distinction, but Prayerwalking is a special challenge of intercession.

We encourage Prayerwalking with at least one partner for two reasons. The main reason is that praying in groups is so much more powerful. God loves to hear concerted prayer (Matt. 18:20).

A second benefit of Prayerwalking with friends is the increased freedom from distracting concerns for personal security than when going solo. There can be hazards, both spiritual and physical, in certain troubled neighborhoods and spiritual hot spots. Without the presence and combined wisdom of friends, such threats can divert attention from praying.

Although a word of caution is in order, we do not want to suggest a ban on unaccompanied Prayerwalking. The Holy Spirit inspires a great deal of impromptu Prayerwalking at times when comrades cannot be found. If you do prayerwalk alone, here are some points to consider.





**.Pray aloud.** When you are praying alone, you will find that your spoken prayers tend to be hushed or even fade into silence. Obedience in prayer sometimes requires silence, but pray out loud if at all possible. Your mind is the battlefield any time you pray. Without friends listening and agreeing, most people find it harder to keep their minds concentrated on prayer. Use your vocal cords to keep focused.

A single person praying audibly in public can appear odd to passerby not accustomed to on-site prayer. A word of explanation will generally earn deferential respect from onlookers. Be more concerned about what God thinks than anyone else.

This huge man came up to me and asked me what I was doing. I told him I was praying over this landfill and that we were going to plant a church right here. He looked at me for a while and said, "If you will pray for a landfill, will you pray for me?"

*-Erwin McManus, about the initial stage of starting a new church in south Dallas, Texas. He is now planting more churches in connection with The Church on Brady in Los Angeles.*

I like to lay hands on the school buildings, praying for all the students while they're all in one place, that God would touch them and bring salvation to our high schools. One day I was leaning on the building praying for the school and the coach drove up for the pep rally and smiled at me. We didn't say anything, but he was aware of what

I was doing. I just think it's a physical witness to the officials of the high school

*-Terry Teykl, pastor of Aldersgate United Methodist Church in College Station, Texas. Terry prays around high schools almost every day while jogging. His "prayer jogging" is purposeful intercession. Before setting out, he asks God to help him choose which school or region to cover in prayer.*

.Re-walk routes. Your solo prayerwalk may just be an opening round. Bring Some friends back to re-pray the routes you have done solo. You will be able to recapitulate some of the same prayers with added faith.


.Avoid engaging evil powers alone. If you must prayerwalk alone, do it wisely with respect to spiritual forces. Some praying is openly antagonistic to evil powers. Other modes of prayer are exploratory, as were Paul's long, prayerful walks through the city of Athens. "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens. His spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols" (Acts 17:16).

Paul was no stranger to confronting evil powers while walking the streets. He had recently come from Philippi, where he had prayed to free a woman from demonic oppression. That act lit a fuse which ignited a spiritual bomb that literally shook the entire spiritual, economic and military power structures of the city. Throughout that conflict Paul was accompanied by supporting friends (Acts 16;12-40).

But in Athens he was alone. Instead of provoking evil spirits, Paul allowed his spirit to be provoked. He observed the avalanche of idolatry engulfing the entire city. God used the anguish of Paul's insight to frame one of the most important messages of his life (Acts 17:16-34, especially v. 23).

Most of our prayer is positive: "Save these people. Bring these folks to repentance. Give these ones a chance to be disciplined." But there is a place for binding demonic powers so that you can get on with the job. If we ever pray specifically against demons, we make sure we have mature Christians in small groups. I know I would not have lasted by myself. They throw too many things at you.

*-Tim Davis, program director of South Hills Community Church in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. Tim leads the spiritual warfare team of the church, which uses Prayerwalking as one part of its outreach plan.*



# Team Idea #2: Prayerwalking as Families

Prayerwalking is a big help for the challenge of praying as a family. Family Prayerwalking takes a literal step toward involving kids in advancing the kingdom of God.

**.Choose routes with kids in mind.** Involve your children in planning short and varied routes. Driving or taking public transportation affords endless options for quickly walked routes. Strollers and wagons help little ones tag along on more extensive walks.

**.Talk about it.** Advance briefings will help kids understand the importance of prayer and help them enjoy the experience. Discussing prayer topics before you go can help kids verbalize their own prayers without rotely repeating the promptings of parents. Simple liturgies can be devised with readings shared by all. You might rehearse them ahead of time. Let the kids know they can suggest that prayers or blessings be spoken for whatever or whomever they might see along the way. At the close of a prayerwalk, affirm everyone for work well done for God's kingdom.

**.Pray and Play.** Your children will not keep lockstep with you for every prayer that is offered, but they can be expected to participate fully for shorter portions. Keep the time very brief that the children are expected to give full attention to praying. During these moments, make it clear that the activity is prayer. Expect to mix fun with intercession. Become adept at widening conversational prayer to include necessary fun tangents.



**.Pray for kids' concerns.** What bothers or thrills them? Children experience incredible pain and exhilaration in matters that can appear petty to adults. Pray for what troubles them. Is it possible to take a short prayerwalk near homes of friends or those they consider to be enemies? After-hours you can prayerwalk their school grounds with them. There are so many ways to incorporate their interests into prayer. If fire trucks excite a young boy, prayerwalk past the fire station, praying for God's protection upon the neighborhood to be added to the services firement provide.

Listen to what requests they come up with during family prayer times. When possible use a prayerwalk to take kids closer to what they already pray for. Or you can lead them in prayer adventures by exposing them to people and neighborhoods much different from their own.

**.Vary the participants and places.** Freshness can come by welcoming extended family members or friends to join the family. At other times, you should decrease the number of people participating to just mom and dad. The praying example of parents or grandparents can make a lasting impression. The value is not only in seeing God answer prayer, but also in the children observing the most important people in their lives in the act of prayer.

It was a good testimony for my children because they wondered why we did that. The kids thought I was crazy when we prayed around the place. My husband opened the paper one morning and told us that Happy Church bought Beaumonde. Our kids were amazed. I said, "You didn't believe that God was faithful? We serve the God of miracles." It sure strengthened the faith of our children.

*-Nikki Rossi, mother of two from Englewood, Colorado. In 1986 the Rossis marched with their bewildered children seven times around Beaumonde, a shopping center that was struggling financially, though it had a prime location. It was an impromptu prayer that God would use the shopping center for his own purposes. A year later, to the surprise of all, their own church was able to buy the property at a low price.*



# Team Idea #3: Prayerwalking With Small Groups

Prayerwalkers tend to bunch up into small groups as they go along, usually two or three people side by side. There is no official terminology, but we are using the term *prayer team* in this book to refer to the unit of people who pray together.

**.Form prayer teams.** Prayer teams will materialize spontaneously, but there can be good reasons to arrange them deliberately. Give thought to matters of safety. Consider what kinds of team composition and gender mix might bother local sensitivities.

The smaller the prayer team, the greater the participation of the prayers. A larger group tends to invite longer and louder prayers which can dampen conversational interaction. Those lacking oratorical gifts or courage sometimes drop out of voicing their prayers and straggle behind.

**.Shuffle prayer team assignments.** Shifting prayer team assignments can help bring out the best from every pray-er. Some highly organized Prayerwalking efforts make a point to plan short routes that converge at set points in order to rest and to reassign prayer partners.

Grouping experienced intercessors with those just learning may have far more advantages in the long run. Prayer is reportedly contagious. If so, then let's take advantage of the mentoring opportunity that Prayerwalking offers.




**.Anticipate prayer team life span.** Prayer triplets can break up the back-and-forth conversational rhythms that eventually get tedious in groups of two. Triplets are proven size for a prayer team with a life span of weeks or months.

Tens of thousands of prayer triplets have been formed in our country alone, praying for specific friends who have yet to believe in Christ. Triplets as a prayer strategy was launched in this country as a “prayer-closet” activity with friends. Only now are we saying to the prayer triplets, “get out and walk around the neighborhood. Pray on the streets of people for whom you are praying on a regular basis.” We’ve found that prayer triplets have a working lifespan of twelve to eighteen months.

*-Brian Mills, author of Three Times Three Equals Twelve: God’s Strategy for Church Growth Through Prayer Triplets (Kingsway Publications, 1986).*

*Brian helps encourage prayer efforts in conjunction with the Evangelical Alliance of Britain.*



A group of diverse young adults are shown in a close-up, smiling and clinking beer bottles outdoors. The scene is set during sunset or sunrise, with warm, golden light illuminating the background. The individuals are of various ethnicities and are dressed in casual summer attire. The background is slightly blurred, showing trees and a building, suggesting an urban or park setting.

## *Team Idea #4: Prayerwalking in Larger Groups*

Larger groups of seven to twenty-four can prove to be the ideal format in certain situations. For example, prayer rallies have been formed by large Prayerwalking groups converging from several different

Outlying areas. Church buildings have been emptied onto the street for a quick, one-time sweep of the surrounding area. When walking with a large group, we have found the following guidelines to be helpful.

**.Plan routes well.** Think through how best to negotiate traffic and streetlights. At what points and how long will you stop along the way? Walk the route ahead of time with an eye on the clock to gauge how much time will be needed.

Consider asking the larger group to form smaller prayer teams for the longest stretches of the walk so that everyone can file along together without cumbersome clumping. You might try launching small prayer teams at one- or two-minute intervals to walk a set course.



**.Work within restrictions.** In some cities laws may require advance permission to walk if the group exceeds a certain size-however informal the group may be. In other places regulation pressure begins when public address systems are used. Consider other areas needing diligent, creative administrative attention, such as liabilities and interaction with the media.

We found it was very important to find the bylaws that govern an event like that. For example, we had to have a liability insurance policy in place. And we found the easiest way to obtain it was to put it as a rider on an existing policy. We would ask if a church would be willing to do that, and then we would pay the premium for it.

*-Bob Gal, a pastor in Calgary, Canada, speaking of preparations for a citywide prayerwalk.*

**.Preparing the way.** It may be beneficial to ask some of your experienced prayerwalkers to precede the larger group by covering the route earlier on the same day. Consider the value of priestly feet first touching the water, opening a way for others to follow (as in the crossing of the Jordan River, Josh. 3:14-17).



**.Use liturgy and music.** Sometimes the dynamics of larger groups give rise to more overt expressions of prayer and praise. Enjoy public worship whether spontaneous or well planned. Printed programs are not much trouble to create. They can free leaders to select from a range of songs on the spur of the moment. In addition, printed programs can offer a way of praying in the power of unison, infusing prayer on the streets with the strength of our liturgical heritage.

If singing is intended, remember that it requires a higher level of organization. Choose appropriate music. Make sure that words to songs are well-known or make printed programs available. For accompaniment, most worshipping prayerwalks use something simple, such as a guitar. The competent use of horn instruments such as the trumpet or trombone can add an exciting sense of occasion and draws attention, if that is what seems desirable. Street acoustics severely limit the value of hand-carried tape layers. Test them for yourself before launching a prayerwalk which depends on them. There is obviously an overlap between a simple prayerwalk emphasizing worship and a full-blown praise march. Try to decide ahead of time which level you are aiming for, and prepare appropriately.

# Prayerwalking on Special Occasions

## ***Special Occasion Idea #1: Evangelistic Events***

On-site prayer has long been a part of preparing for an evangelistic rally. Intercessors have often prayed around and through the place of assembly before meetings. There is an even longer history of special intercession on site during the evangelistic meeting itself.

Once we had [Christian apologist] Josh McDowell come and speak. We had been praying fervently for that time. Normally he speaks only three times on a campus. The third meeting was so crowded that we had to have two talks that night, which was very unusual for him. The campus had a total of about thirty-two thousand students, and we estimated a total of about twelve thousand came those three nights.

*-Sherman Brand, speaking of the fruitful climate for drawing people to Christ at Penn State University in the late seventies, a period in which some found it difficult to find friends at Penn State who hadn't recently heard the gospel. Prayer was recognized as a preparing the way for evangelism of every sort. Students gathered regularly for extended prayer, often walking across the campus two-by-two to blanket it in prayer. Sherman was a campus director at Penn State for Campus Crusade for Christ at the time.*

Prayerwalkers are now more vigorously ranging throughout a city before evangelism events, directing their prayers upon the homes and workplaces of people in addition to the site of an evangelistic event. The subject of their prayers stretches beyond high attendance at the meetings and emphasizes the emergence of new discipleship groups and church plantings.



# *Special Occasion Idea #2: Protests and Demonstrations*

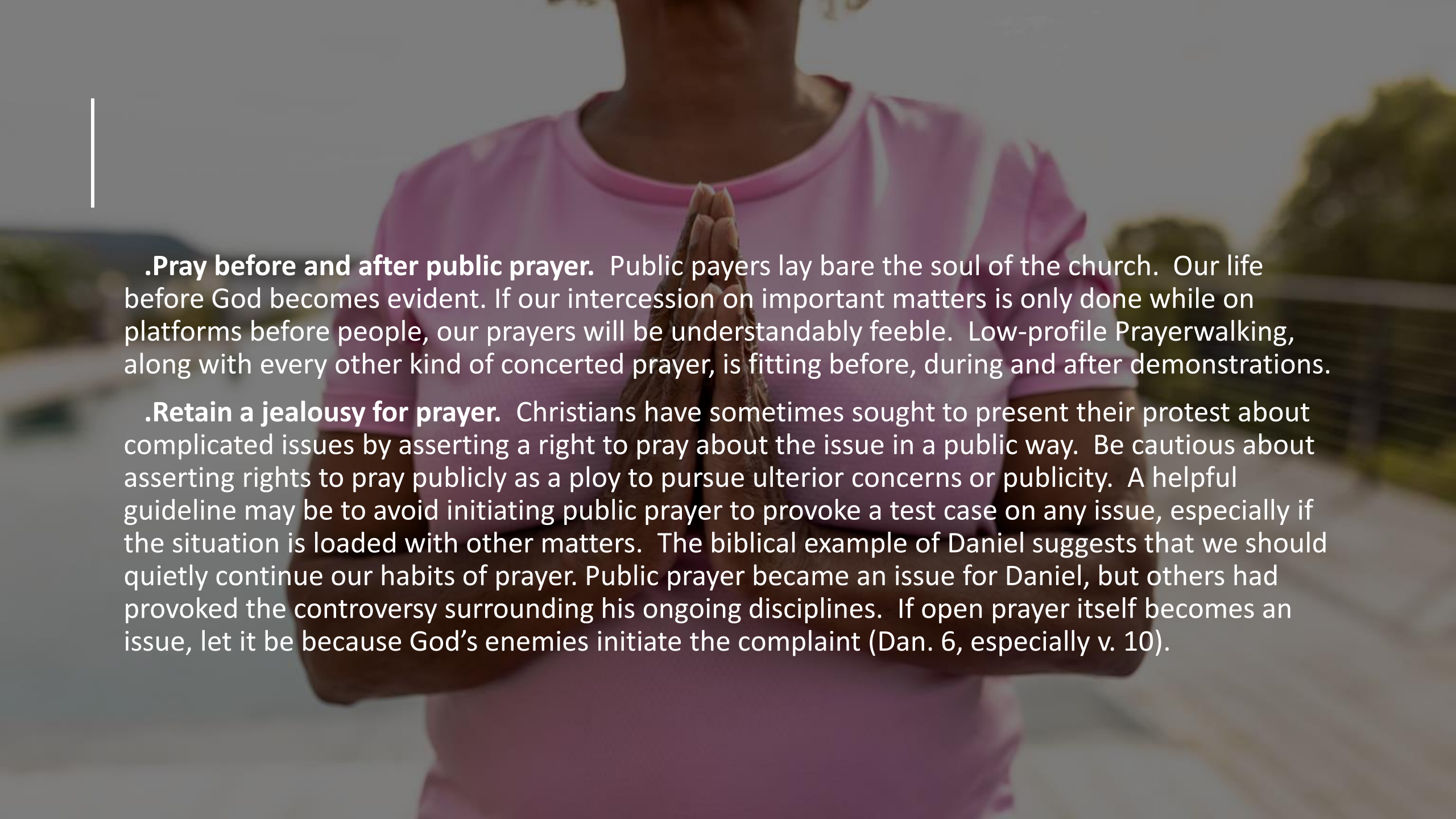
Christians in some parts of the world have been emboldened to make known their convictions in the public square. While it is good to see such demonstrations for worthy causes increasingly attended by prayer, mixing prayer and protest must be done carefully.

A girl got off the bus at the abortion clinic. She was very abusive to the sidewalk counselor who was trying to speak to her—swearing and cursing at her. The girl went in through the door. The sidewalk counselors all got together and prayed then and there for this girl who had gone in. Just a few minutes later she came out in tears. She said, “Will you really help me? Do you really have something you can do for me?” they took her to another place and offered her help, and they continued working with her all the way through her pregnancy and continued with her for years, helping her in different instances.

*-Barbara Malek, codirector of the Crisis Pregnancy Center in Omaha, Nebraska.*

*She encourages Christians to pray quietly while displaying small signs across from abortion clinics.*

*Under her direction, most of the group prays continually while a sidewalk counselor approaches women entering the clinic to offer help in pursuing alternatives to abortions.*

A person wearing a pink t-shirt is shown from the chest up, with their hands clasped together in a prayer position. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and a fence. A vertical white line is visible on the left side of the image.

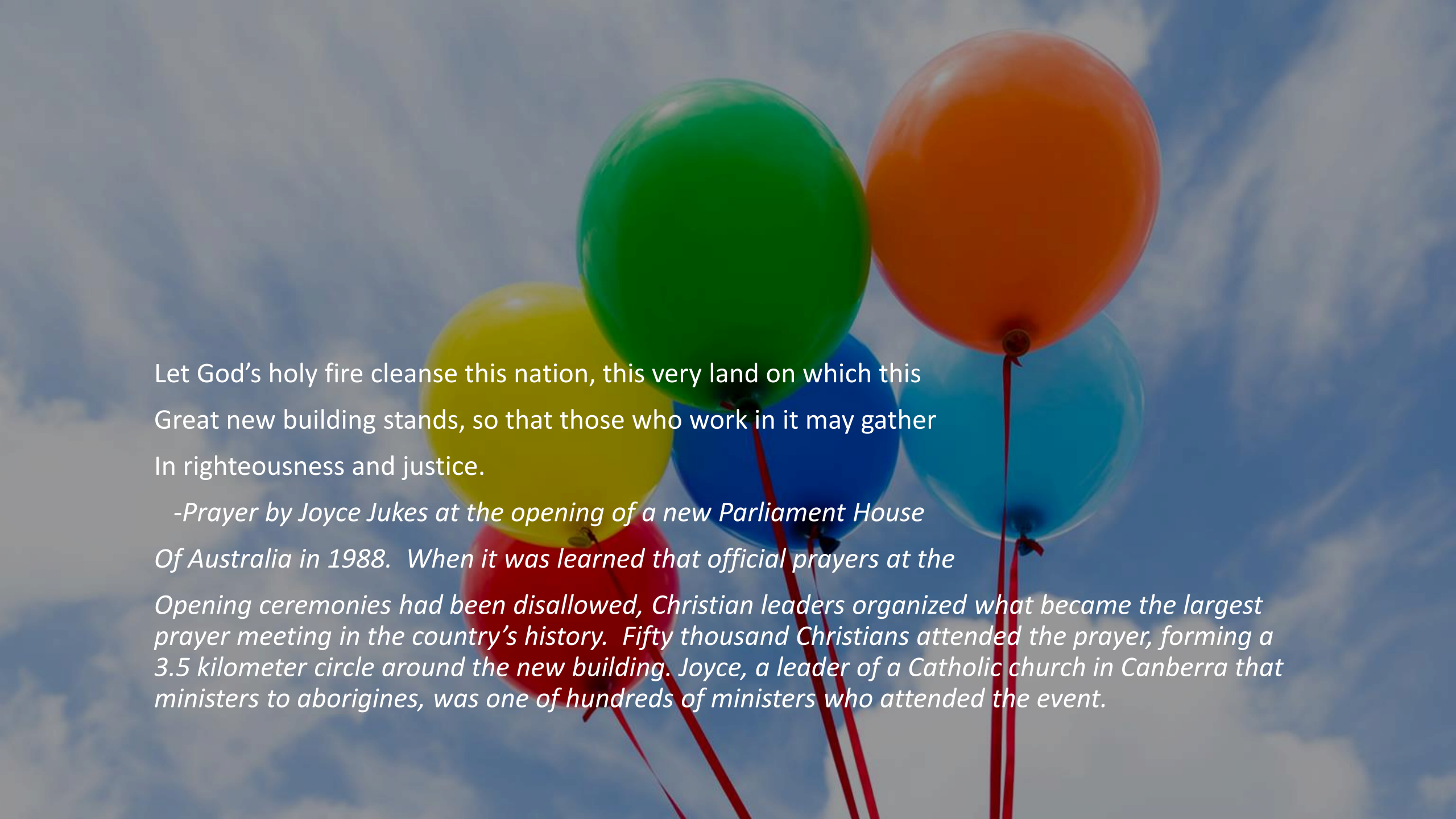
**.Pray before and after public prayer.** Public prayer lay bare the soul of the church. Our life before God becomes evident. If our intercession on important matters is only done while on platforms before people, our prayers will be understandably feeble. Low-profile Prayerwalking, along with every other kind of concerted prayer, is fitting before, during and after demonstrations.

**.Retain a jealousy for prayer.** Christians have sometimes sought to present their protest about complicated issues by asserting a right to pray about the issue in a public way. Be cautious about asserting rights to pray publicly as a ploy to pursue ulterior concerns or publicity. A helpful guideline may be to avoid initiating public prayer to provoke a test case on any issue, especially if the situation is loaded with other matters. The biblical example of Daniel suggests that we should quietly continue our habits of prayer. Public prayer became an issue for Daniel, but others had provoked the controversy surrounding his ongoing disciplines. If open prayer itself becomes an issue, let it be because God's enemies initiate the complaint (Dan. 6, especially v. 10).



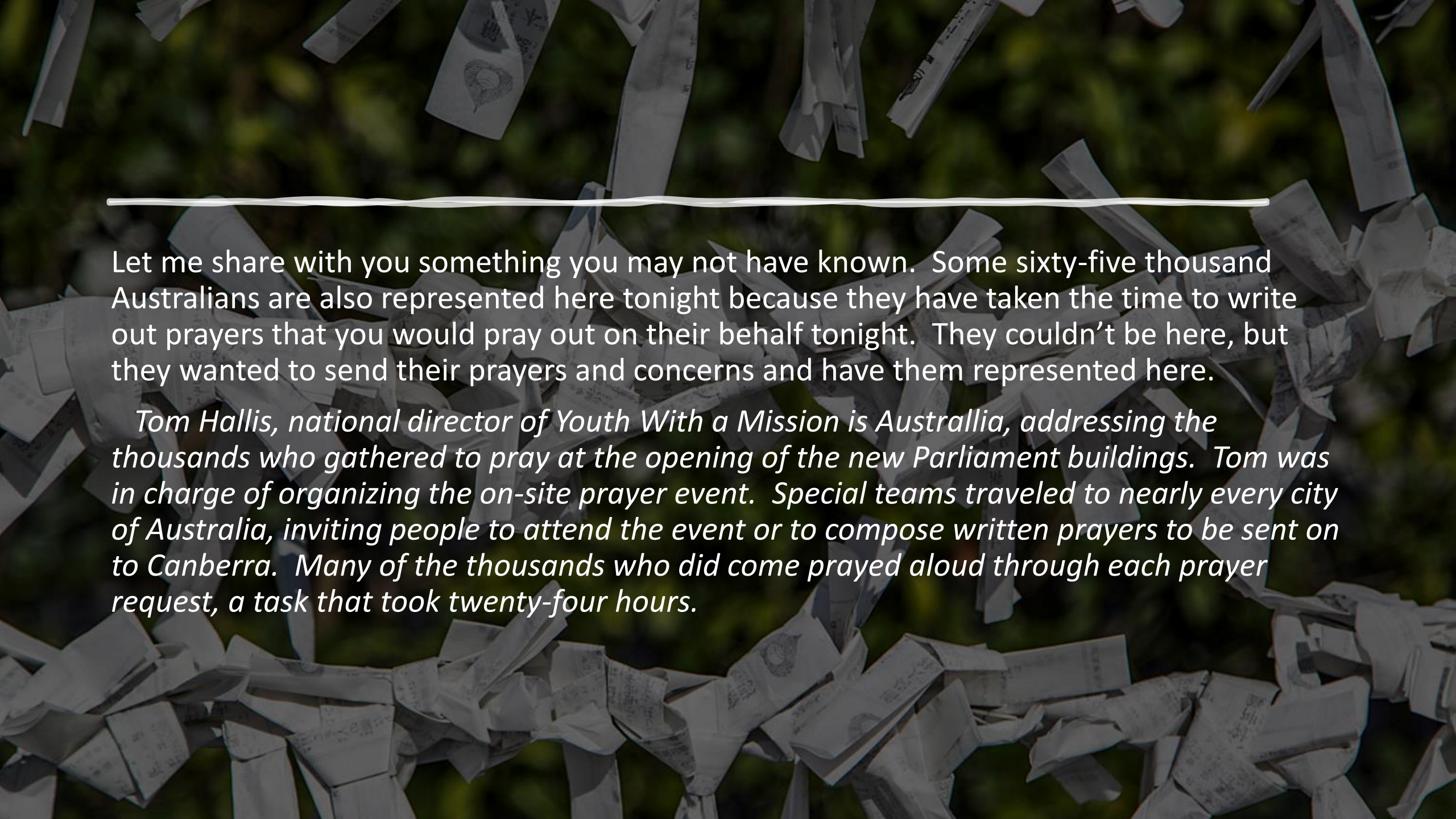
## *Special Occasions Idea #3: Special Festival Days*

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, prayerwalks may have a special significance on religious holidays, anniversaries and national or civil festivals of every sort. Some traditions such as Christmas caroling seem ready-made for adaptation by creative prayerwalkers. If parades are planned by the community, the routes can be walked beforehand and following. Worshipping prayerwalkers have sometimes registered as official entries into public parades. Prayer rallies have brought a fitting Christian presence at the seats of government on days of dedication or commemoration.



Let God's holy fire cleanse this nation, this very land on which this  
Great new building stands, so that those who work in it may gather  
In righteousness and justice.

*-Prayer by Joyce Jukes at the opening of a new Parliament House  
Of Australia in 1988. When it was learned that official prayers at the  
Opening ceremonies had been disallowed, Christian leaders organized what became the largest  
prayer meeting in the country's history. Fifty thousand Christians attended the prayer, forming a  
3.5 kilometer circle around the new building. Joyce, a leader of a Catholic church in Canberra that  
ministers to aborigines, was one of hundreds of ministers who attended the event.*



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Let me share with you something you may not have known. Some sixty-five thousand Australians are also represented here tonight because they have taken the time to write out prayers that you would pray out on their behalf tonight. They couldn't be here, but they wanted to send their prayers and concerns and have them represented here.

*Tom Hallis, national director of Youth With a Mission in Australia, addressing the thousands who gathered to pray at the opening of the new Parliament buildings. Tom was in charge of organizing the on-site prayer event. Special teams traveled to nearly every city of Australia, inviting people to attend the event or to compose written prayers to be sent on to Canberra. Many of the thousands who did come prayed aloud through each prayer request, a task that took twenty-four hours.*