

Neighborhood Exegesis

Take an hour to an hour and a half to walk around the community. Take with you a notepad and something to write with. Observe, observe, observe. What do you see? Feel free to write down your observations. Be mindful to pray during this short journey.

Things to consider on this walk:

What do you see?

Physical features of the places in the area such as...

- Housing - age, style, state of repair, accessibility, color
- Spaces – open, common, private, vandalism, play areas, sports fields
- Green areas – gardens, parks, trees, flowers, open/closed aspects
- Community spaces – shopping center, churches, schools, centers
- Cars – registration date, make, size, state of repair
- Gathering places – pubs, betting shops, clubs, centers, take-away shops
- Make a purchase at a local shop if available—maybe a cup of coffee or an ice cream cone.

What do you observe about the people?

- Ages, groups, clothes, styles, economic status
- Faces, eyes, moods, body language
- Where are people gathering?
- Why are people gathering?

What do you sense?

- How do you feel in this community? Why? Is that about you or the place?
- What is the “spirit” of this place?
- What do you know about its background? What would you like to know?
- Jesus saw problems beneath the surface. What problems do you suspect here? Where do you hear creation groaning (Romans 8)?
- Where are the places you sense life and activity in this neighborhood? Where do you see joy and engagement?

What questions do you have?

- What would you want to know and how would you find out?
- Who would you like to speak to?

What prayer is rising up within you?

- What would you ask God for this place and these people?
- What Scripture passages come to mind as you look and listen?

- If you were to carry one image/situation/person away, what would it be?