

Walking as a Spiritual Practice – Praying the Miles

Praying the miles is something I read about and practiced during my marathon running days. Kristin Armstrong (Lance’s first wife), practiced this when completing her first marathon. Learning her story and training to run my own marathons, I decided that prayer was a good way to spend those 26.2 miles. So, I would build a list of people, situations, etc. that I needed to pray about, and ask friends, family, and co-workers if there was anything I could pray about for them during my run.

In 2009, I may not have finished the Country Music Marathon without this practice. At mile 13 or 14, I’d had all I could take and was planning to stop after mile 16. This was the last mile that I promised someone other than myself that I would pray for something. I wanted to keep my commitment to others, even if I couldn’t keep it to myself. As I approached mile 16, I was thankful to be almost done, when I came upon an Exxon station that sold Gatorade over ice. I stopped inside, bought one, and finished the 26 miles. Thank God and thanks to the family that allowed me to pray for them.

I’ve learned that you don’t have to be running a marathon to pray the miles. This simple practice is really just making a list that you will take to God in prayer during each mile or other distance marker. This can be done silently and solo or aloud with a prayer partner.

When done with a partner, you simply pray aloud for the items on your list and on your partner’s list and they would do the same. Praying aloud with a partner, should be within an established relationship where trust and transparency exists. Though you may pray aloud with another, be respectful to maintain confidentiality and keep the prayers between you, your partner, and God. If your partner wishes you to solicit additional prayers, make sure you understand how much or how little they wish for you to share with others.

In the space below, as a prompt, write the name of the person, need, or situation that will help you remember what you plan to pray about on each leg of your walk or run. You can put only one or several prayers in a space depending on your individual need and leading of the Spirit. Savor this time with God in God’s creation.
