Prayer Hike Guide

Prayer hiking combines a walk in the beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park with specific, intercessory prayer.

Below are some suggested ways to pray that will be triggered by something you see, hear or sense while you hike.

They are only suggestions. The most important suggestion is to allow the Holy Spirit to show you how to pray.

Following the prayer suggestions is information about two trails. Both are near the Townsend entrance to the national park.

These trails are suggested for their location and their relative ease of hiking.

Feel free, though, to hike and pray on any trail. For other trails, see http://www.hikinginthesmokys.com/

**How to Pray**

* When you begin, ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind exactly what is on God’s heart, so you can pray in agreement with Him
* When you see the first bit of litter on the trail, pray for people whose lives are all trashed up with sin. Ask God to reveal Himself and His purpose to them in a way that they can clearly realize their need for a Savior
* When you first hear water or become aware that you no longer hear water, thank God for Jesus, the Living Water, and pray for those who are living dry and desolate lives. Pray for the living well of life to spring up in believers and overflow to others
* When you hear a sound that is not native to the forest, pray for those whose lives are in a headlong rush. Ask God to slow you down so that you don’t miss seeing people and the opportunities God provides for loving others
* When you see fishermen, ask God to help you be effective fishers of men
* The first time you hear a bird, ask God to put a new song of hope into the lives of people you will meet in the next few days. Pray this for your own life, or lives of friends or family members
* When you turn around to begin the hike back, pray that those in bondage to sin will repent and turn to God.
* When you reach the end of your hike, thank God for the beauty of His creation and for His power and majesty

**Suggested trails**

Schoolhouse Gap Trail

Directions: At Townsend “Y” intersection, drive on Laurel Ford Road toward Cades Cove. At 3.7 miles, pull into parking lot on right. Trail begins here.

Schoolhouse Gap Trail is a wide wagon-size trail that is on a gentle slope.

The trail intersects with other trails at 1.1, 2 and 2.2 miles, so you can plan how far you want to walk.

**Trail Features: Wildflowers, quiet forest hike**

**Total Elevation Gain: 513 feet**

**Avg. Elev Gain / Mile: 270 feet**

**Highest Elevation: 2158 feet**

**Trail Difficulty Rating: 4.83 (easy)**

West Prong Trail

Directions:

From the Townsend "Y" intersection, drive west on Laurel Creek Road towards Cades Cove. Roughly 2/10 mile from the "Y", turn left to go towards the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont. Drive another two miles and turn right into the parking area for the West Prong Trail, located just before reaching the Institute.

The West Prong Trail begins as a steady climb, ascending roughly 625 feet over the course of the first 1.4 miles, before descending towards the West Prong of the Little River.

At roughly 0.3 miles from the trailhead, stay left (towards campsite 18) to continue on the West Prong Trail. The side trail heading downhill will take you to an old cemetery that's still in use by the families who once lived in this area.

This first section of the hike is very peaceful and quiet as it climbs along the north slopes of Fodderstack Mountain. However, once the trail begins its descent, the rush of the stream in the valley below becomes louder and louder.

Roughly 2 miles from the trailhead you'll reach a creek crossing without a footbridge - only a few rocks and logs.

Just beyond the creek crossing, sitting adjacent to the West Prong of the Little River, is backcountry campsite 18. The three campsites located here offer an outstanding place to spend a night or two under the stars. There are several large logs and boulders in and around the stream that make this a great place for a picnic lunch.