

10 Ways to Decode a Campus

Tom Virtue

When you show up on campus, what should you want do? One thing that would be helpful is a little decoding, or spying out of the land. Check out Nehemiah 1:3-4, and Numbers 13:1,17-20 to get a picture of this.

The key is to get an understanding of what God is doing and where He wants to work so that we can partner with Him in all that He is doing.

- 1. Prayer walking.** Praying while walking around on location with your eyes open (both physically and spiritually):
 - a. Ask for God to work
 - b. Ask for God to give you a vision, a burden, and ideas.
 - c. See Nehemiah (1:3-4) sat down and wept when he saw and felt a burden.
 - d. The Holy Spirit will give you an emotional and spiritual burden.
- 2. Gather stuff.** Maps, brochures, catalogues, and other info about the campus.
- 3. Get an escort.** Find someone who knows their way around, with an insider's view. Pray for this!
- 4. Look for Great Commission resources.** God's people are here! Look for Christian students, a church, or Christian faculty. Ask people, "Do you know any students who go to a Bible study or church?"
- 5. Get pictures of the campus.** Maybe make a photo album. Shoot pictures of the places where people hang out or party.
- 6. What's it like to live there?** Lodging, shopping, transportation.
- 7. University life: Academic disciplines.** Get a copy of the school calendar. What is the campus identity? What sports are big?
- 8. Student life.** What do they do for fun? What are the hang-outs? Where do they live? Where are they from? What organizations, associations, and sub-cultures?
- 9. Worldviews and ideologies.** Which ones are represented on campus? Use surveys and focus groups. Ask questions and listen.
- 10. Persons of Peace (read Luke 10:1-12).** Like Lydia in Acts 16, people who are receptive to us and to our message, who might be used by God to reach their "oikos" (social webs) and be the core of a future transformational community. They may or may not be a Christian yet. Receptive and influential. "You meet one person and you meet a group." When rejected, keep going.