

# How Long, Lord?

Recently I attended a two-day gathering of prayer leaders from various denominations. Each year they come together to “talk shop,” share ideas, and pray for each other. Both mornings we started in worship led by a prayer leader from a liturgical background. Although I come from a nonliturgical church, I enjoyed this form of worship. It was a refreshing change of pace for me.

A number of times we paused in silence to listen to the Spirit.

One of those moments came after singing a great old hymn I had not heard in many years: “The Church’s One Foundation.” In a moment of silence following the hymn, my heart pondered the words of one of the verses. I found it prophetic regarding the Church today: “Though with a scornful wonder the world sees her oppressed, By schism rent asunder, by heresies distressed.”

## Assessing Our Condition

Certainly this is a picture of the way many unbelievers look at the Church and at followers of Christ. They scorn us, but there is a wonder there as well. They mock us because of our conflict with each other, our shortcomings, and our hypocrisy. Because we have lost influence in our nation, we are now fair game for insults and growing attacks on our religious freedoms. As a result, many believers in the U.S. are reeling in surprise and uncertainty. Their hope is waning.

The song’s next lyrics are also prophetic: “Yet saints their watch are keeping, their prayer goes up: ‘How long?’” That’s the cry of many today—many who have been praying for revival and spiritual awakening for years, even decades. How long, Lord?

Then the verse concludes in hope: “And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.” As I pondered the lyrics, I became increasingly filled with joy. God is raising up more and more watchmen in this nation who are praying for revival, for spiritual awakening, and for God’s purposes in the elections and in the nation. They are crying out, “How long?” but it is not a cry of hopelessness. It is a cry filled with hope and the belief that a powerful move of the Spirit is coming soon.

## **Renewing Our Focus**

Where is your heart focused as we face the scorn of the world? Are you frightened and nervous at what might lie ahead? Or are you being a watchman? Are you praying with God’s purposes in mind? Are you keeping your eyes—and heart—firmly focused on Jesus Christ?

I am excited by the uncertain future because I know it is bringing a growing desperation to the Church and to individual believers. And that desperation will turn to prayer, along with the cry, “How long, Lord?” My heart hears Him say, “Soon, My child. Soon. Watch and pray.”

—Jonathan Graf is the publisher of *Prayer Connect*.