PRAYERCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer

WATCH AND PRAY

Staying Alert in a Iroubled World

Confronting Terror with Confidence
Honoring First Responders
Praying Church INDICATORS



2017

SCHOOL OF PRAYER

SERIES

In Prayer
with DICK EASTMAN

THE GROWTH CLUSTER: Abounding in Prayer

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All sessions start at 9 a.m. (MST)

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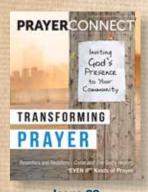
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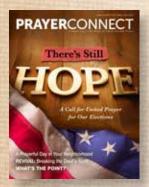


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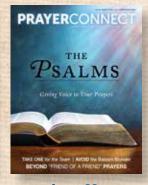
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Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

There are a number of gifted speakers associated with *Prayer Connect*. Jonathan Graf regularly ministers in churches of varying sizes. Carol Madison is also available to minister in the area of prayer for revival and community transformation. Our parent organizations, Harvest Prayer Ministries and the Church Prayer Leaders Network, have many speakers associated with their ministries. You can find their contact information at the respective emails or websites.

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The mission of **PRAYER**CONNECT is

- To encourage and equip believers toward a deeper walk with Jesus Christ through prayer our experiential connection to God.
- 2. To resource prayer leaders and pastors with tools to help them motivate, disciple, and mobilize believers in churches to be a part of an army that seeks to pray the purposes of God for churches, communities, and the nations.
- **3.** To be a unifying force between prayer ministries, community transformation groups, and churches.

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Previously in Prayer Connect

Jesus' prayer in John 17 gives us the perfect example of how to pray for protection, sanctification, and unity throughout the Body of



Christ. This issue takes a look at each major component of how Jesus prayed—and reminds us that He is even now interceding for us! *Praying the Heart of Jesus* and other back issues can be ordered at *prayershop.org*.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Can We Stop Praying Now?

t was an amazing year as far as prayer is concerned. In my 20-plus years in the prayer movement, I have never seen anything like the amount of praying that went on during 2016. From multiple ministries coming together as Pray As One to rally prayer for the nation and elections, to perhaps 400,000 believers gathered to pray on the Washington Mall at Together 2016 in July, to churches calling for prayer meetings—this has truly been a phenomenal year.



This magazine's parent ministry, Harvest Prayer Ministries, saw its reach expand in multiple ways as well. One resource, *Desperate for Change: 40 Days of Prayer for America*, had great sales for several months in 2012. But then it sold just 2,000 or so a year—until 2016. More than 18,000 sold in the nine months prior to the elections. Our election prayer guide, "There's Still Hope," which first appeared in our March *Prayer Connect* issue, sold more than 40,000 copies in its booklet form and was viewed online or downloaded by another 50,000-plus. That same election issue of *Prayer Connect* sold 2,000 more individual copies than any previous issue. And our web traffic this past fall was up more than 900 percent, with most viewers coming to the Pray for America section.

A nerve of desperation was clearly struck!

One has to admit it was an unprecedented election result. Almost no one saw Donald Trump winning, yet he did. Intercessors were praying desperately for truth to be revealed, for a standard of righteousness, and for God's purposes for our nation to be released. We know from Scriptures that God raises up and takes down kings and rulers, so we have to trust that He did just that in this election. Clearly God has a purpose for bringing this seemingly absurd, long-shot candidate to power.

What Do We Do Now?

Many believers will now sit back, believing the elections are over and "God's individual" is in leadership. But that would be the absolutely wrong thing to do. We need to raise up even more prayer. Why?

First, President Trump cannot be described as a godly man. He needs prayer to make godly decisions for the nation. Only God's intervention can turn our nation back to Him.

Second, most major revivals in history came during times of serious social desperation. When people are unsettled and in major discomfort, they look heavenward for answers. Hundreds of thousands of believers have been praying for revival in the American Church and for spiritual awakening in our nation. Social desperation certainly describes our nation in this hour. I think we are on the cusp of the significant revival and awakening we have been seeking.

To help us all pray, a number of ministries have come together to launch Pray 100, a prayer initiative to pray for President Trump and the nation, starting on Inauguration Day, January 20, 2017, and running for 100 days. Check it out at *facebook. com/prayfirst100*. And keep praying!

-Jonathan Graf



NEWS**&EVENTS**

God's Movement through Prayer

Native Americans Offer Forgiveness

ative Americans, representing 1,000 tribes, gathered in Washington, D.C., on October 21, 2016, for an historic event called All Tribes D.C.: A National Day of Prayer for the First Nations.

Native American tribes came from around the United States and Canada for a public ceremony on the National Mall to forgive the U.S. government for breaking treaties with their ancestors. The day of prayer, held near the Washington Monument, included intercessory petitions, proclamations, and declarations of forgiveness by leaders from All Tribes D.C., a fellowship of Christians representing American Indians from the U.S. and Canada.



Negiel Bigpond, a full-blooded Euchee (Yuchi) Indian, coordinated the first-ever national prayer gathering of Native Americans in the nation's capital. "We chose to forgive the U.S., whether it asked for it or not," he says. Bigpond is a fourth-generation pastor who offered forgiveness and spoke blessings over the nation, alongside other tribal prayer warriors. He believes that Native Americans have taken a good first step toward aid-

ing national awakening by extending forgiveness to the nation.

Portions of a proclamation posted on the All Tribes D.C. website (*alltribesdc.org*) were read by tribal leaders gathered on the National Mall. The proclamation reads, in part: "We stand in the gap for those who are unable or unwilling to forgive, and call upon the Master of Life to forgive us for harboring unforgiveness, resentment, hatred, bitterness and rage. We repent of every curse spoken over America by our ancestors and we release the power of forgiveness to bring healing and the peace of Creator God to this land."

First Nations intercessors will convene again in 2017 during the third week of October.

Georgia Hosts Prayer Movement

he OneCry message of the urgent need for spiritual awakening has spread across the state of Georgia, culminating in a statewide prayer gathering on November 20 in Cartersville, GA. The gathering was hosted at the LakePoint Champions Center, where a crowd of 1,800 people prayed for personal revival and national awakening.

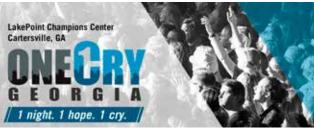
The movement began in September 2016 when churches in seven cities in Georgia (Dalton, Cumming, Albany, Americus, Rutledge, Douglas, and Thomasville) hosted four-day events that featured strategic preaching about the urgent need for revival—both personally and nationally. Teams from Life Action Ministries traveled to the cities to lead the meetings.

In Dalton, more than 60 diverse congregations across denominational and

ethnic lines gathered in a city convention center when it was determined the host church would be too small. The other six cities also focused on unity among churches.

Because of the growing and unified prayer movement in Bartow County (where Cartersville is located), the OneCry leadership approached 100 pastors and business leaders in Cartersville to inquire about hosting the November 20 statewide event. The leaders unanimously agreed to host the prayer event and raise the money to cover the cost. In addition to the participation of 1,800 people in attendance, the event was simulcast to the other cities and broadcast on American Family Radio.

Organizers of the simulcast expressed



desire for two outcomes: 1) that pastors with hearts for prayer would be strengthened, and 2) that local church prayer meetings would either be strengthened or resurrected.

Dr. Bob Bakke, member of the OneCry executive team, produced and hosted the simulcast. He also produced the Revive Our Hearts CryOut16! broadcast in September that gathered more than 400,000 women around the world in unified prayer for revival. More of the Georgia story can be read at *one-cry.com/georgia*.

NEWS&EVENT



Decision America Tour Concludes in NC

ev. Franklin Graham concluded his 50-state Decision America Tour prayer rally on October 13 in his home state of North Carolina. For several months leading up to the presidential election in November, Graham and his team toured the country, stopping at each state capital, urging Christians to pray for America and to get out and vote. During each rally, Graham invited attendees to pray

in groups for the nation, for the local government workers, for law enforcement, and for a revival in peoples' hearts.

In Raleigh, NC, more than 14,000 people gathered at the final rally. There were an additional 150,000 live views online, and more than 287,000 people watched via Facebook Live. A total of 236,950—an average of nearly



5,000 people per stop—turned out for the 50 state rallies (decisionamericatour.com).

Dust Storm Protects Christians

od created a massive dust storm in October to deliver Islamic converts from the militants who hunted them, according to a report from Bibles For Mideast. The ministry claims that immediately after a mass baptism for newly saved Christians, militants surrounded their bus and fired shots.

"About 50 people, including baptism candidates, attended the service," a new believer reports. "After the baptism service and prayers, we all entered the bus to return back to our house church for the worship service and the Lord's Supper. Suddenly some militants . . . started shooting with guns toward us."

The converts and their leaders feared the worst. "Really, we did not know what to do, but started praying to the Lord for His mighty protection," the report continues. That's when the wind started to pick up, and dust began to swirl around them.

"Suddenly we saw a giant dust storm form behind our bus. At first we [were] all afraid of . . . the dust storm. We thought we may not be able to go beyond and [would] be held by the militants. But praise the Lord! Praise the Lord again and again! We all felt that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared upon the dust storm as a Mighty and Wonderful Man showing His protecting and lovely hands toward

us with a sweet smile. Iesus saved us. He Himself blocked the road of militants in the form of a dust storm," the report

According to the Bibles for Mideast

website (bibles4mideast.com), the ministry is the fruit of prayers and fasting for the evangelism of the Middle East. It is an underground mission that distributes Bibles and establishes house churches.





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IHOP to Raise Up Intercessors for Global Missions

nternational House of Prayer of Kansas City (IHOPKC) has joined with Youth With a Mission (YWAM) in a new commitment to cover global missions in prayer. It is an intercession and missions partnership that could help see the gospel preached in every nation.

The partnership was birthed on Sept. 11, 2016, at the end of a week-long gathering of thousands of YWAM and IHOPKC staff that focused on several Great Commission thrusts, including ending Bible poverty (by providing Scripture in every language) and a commitment to seeing every sphere of society impacted with the gospel.

Mike Bickle, founder of International House of Prayer, took the challenge from Loren Cunningham, co-founder of YWAM, to help raise up one million intercessors to cover their global missions

"We love what the Lord has done through Loren and Darlene Cunningham and the whole YWAM family for over 50 years, and we are committing to cover them in intercession for the great cause of advancing the Kingdom in the nations and to call other prayer ministries throughout the world to join us," says Bickle.

Darlene Cunningham expressed gratefulness: "The practice of intercession—hearing from God and praying His prayers—[was] part of the core DNA of YWAM from the beginning. We need it, and I am so thankful that IHOPKC is joining us."

Other senior YWAM leaders such as John Dawson, David Hamilton, and Mark Anderson, joined IHOPKC's Allen Hood and Daniel Lim on stage in a demonstration of unity.

Dawson, YWAM president emeritus, spoke about prayer movements that have

birthed revivals, and the way revivals have birthed mission movements.

"The 17-year commitment to 24/7 prayer maintained faithfully by IHOPKC is no small thing in our eyes," Dawson says. "Out at the ends of the earth, our missionaries can feel the power of this loving shield; in the hard places, in the dangerous places, we know we are not alone because intercessors are travailing, even through the night watches."

Since its 1999 launch, IHOPKC has partnered with other organizations to see the gospel preached in all the nations. The ministry has established 24/7 prayer and worship as the center of its missions base in Kansas City, MO.

JENNIFER LECLAIRE, taken from International Prayer Connections (ipcprayer.org).



Staying Alert in a Iroubled World

WATCH &



fter a long walk on a beautiful Minnesota fall day, I stopped at a coffee shop to grab a caramel cooler. Sitting outside for a bit, I sipped my cold drink and watched people and traffic go by. Suddenly a car driven by an elderly man caught my attention. On his passenger window, in ugly red letters, someone had scrawled a disturbing message: "Nice parking [expletive]!"

I felt both grief and anger that this poor man was driving around in public with such a shaming and degrading message scribbled on his window. I watched him drive toward the far side of the shopping complex.

I was deeply bothered, then I thought, Hey, not on my watch!

Quickly finishing my cooler, I headed inside to a public restroom, grabbed several paper towels, and wetted some of them with water and soap.

I found his car parked in front of a restaurant, where I assume the man had gone for dinner. I thought it would be an easy fix but then realized the man had already tried to scrub the message from his window. The substance the perpetrator had used was not going to come off easily.

Of course, that made me even more determined! So for the next 20 minutes, I scraped the message with my fingernails until I finally removed all of it. As I walked home, I prayed for the man—hoping he would know there are plenty of people who care about what is good and right. I also prayed that he might somehow experience the love of Jesus through other people in his life.

watchful Eyes, urgent voices

As followers of Jesus, we are confronted daily with sin, hatred, and injustices. We cannot right every wrong, fix every hurtful attitude, or intervene in every harmful situation. But God still calls us to "watch and pray" on behalf of our nation and the people around us.

The idea of being "watchmen" comes from several places in Scripture. In Isaiah 62 God instructs His people to take their places on the walls of Jerusalem, crying out to God day and night. Jesus instructs His disciples to "watch and pray" (Luke 21:36). And the Apostle Paul reminds

PRAY

the Church to be devoted, watchful, and thankful (Col. 4:2). It is both an assignment and a privilege for followers of Jesus to stay alert, watch carefully, and pray with urgency.

In this issue, James Goll writes about his regular appointments with God on spiritually significant days of the year. He also urges us to be sensitive to the Spirit's leading, which might mean getting up in the middle of the night to take a prayer watch. David Kubal issues the warning that God holds nations accountable for their sins—and the role of today's intercessors is to recognize pending judgment and pray accordingly. Dale Schlafer reminds us that God is the true Watchman, and our role is to pay attention, to observe what is going on around us, and to learn from God how to pray according to His purposes.

It's time to step up and take our positions on the walls. Invite the Spirit to give you watchful eyes and a sensitive heart to the needs around you. Be ready to pray—and perhaps also ready to grab some paper towels.

CAROL MADISON is editor of Prayer Connect.



chosen as a SPIRITUAL SPIRITUAL WATCHMAN

have a calendar on which I write down my many diverse appointments. I am a widower, so at the beginning of every new year, the first thing that goes on my calendar is my four adult kids and their birthdays.

But the four quickly became eight, as all of them married in a three-year time frame. So now I have eight appointments. Oh, mercy, those eight now have quickly become 14 and counting.

My calendar is so full of special appointments—and I would not miss one of them. These are times to celebrate life. I attempt to be prompt, prepared—and even bring gifts!

I approach my appointments on God's calendar in the same manner. I agree with God's Word and declare that I am a chosen watchman! I show up expectant, ever ready, and prepared to pray. I set apart in my yearly planning many of the prayer rallies across the nation and world. For instance, I reserve the first Thursday in May every year for the National Day of Prayer—done. It is on my calendar and I will participate. The Day to Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem on the first Sunday in October—check mark. The Global Day of Prayer on the Day of Pentecost—I always set that date aside.

How about the Day of Atonement and Passover? Yes, I observe the major Jewish Feasts in some manner every year. These are hallowed days of worship and prayer unto the Lamb! For me, this too is a form of being a watchman on the walls.

Each of us has been chosen to be a watchman of the Lord in this generation. It is a calling. An assignment. And in whatever ways God calls you to pray, it should be a very strategic appointment

By James W. Goll

on your calendar. We get an indication of the importance of our assignments in this exhortation from Isaiah 62:6–7:

I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.

our biblical mandate

The Greek word for *watch* is *grégoreó*, which means to be awake or vigilant. Dictionaries bring us a variety of definitions, including "keeping awake in order to guard," "a close observation," "to be on the alert," and "to be alert."

Over the years, I have heard a lot of teachings on what will happen in the last days, most of it rather fear-based—such

as storing up food, being prepared to protect yourself, and taking your money out of the bank. I rarely hear faith-building, edifying teaching concerning the believer's biblical response to those times. I am not saying that we shouldn't be prepared for difficult times. But I've read in God's Word: "Anything that is not done in faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23, 1sv).

So I continue to seek the Lord and ask to learn His will and His ways.

The Task of the Watchman By Dave Butts



have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of

the earth" (Isaiah 62:6-7).

There is a movement of prayer, firmly rooted in Scripture, taking place all over the planet. It is the call of God to His people to take their places on the walls as watchmen. Whether we look to the Old Testament or the New, we find God is calling us to watch and pray.

Our modern culture does not readily identify with the ancient concept of watchmen on the walls. We need to train ourselves in what it means to be a part of this great company of the "alert."

It is clear from the Isaiah 62 passage that the job of a watchman is a continual commitment. It is not sporadic. It does not depend upon feelings. Because of the life-or-death nature and constancy of the watchman's task, it is an assignment for the many, not just the one. Isaiah describes an intensity that must be shared—day and night, never silent, no rest. Groups of committed believers who band together in watchful prayer will be able to stay at their post.

Notice also in this passage that it is God who posts the watchmen. This is a divine assignment, not just the latest prayer fad. To stand on the wall as a watchman, stationed there by the Lord Himself, is a great privilege. We need to receive and obey such a call with gratitude and humility.

Perhaps the overwhelming characteristic of watchman prayer is that it is to be done with open eyes. This does not necessarily imply physical eyes (although it certainly can), but we must hold our spiritual eyes wide open.

what do watchmen Look For?

What are we, as watchmen looking for as we pray? First, we watch for an enemy attack. Certainly in Old Testament times, this sort of defensive watchfulness was at the heart of the task. The watchman on the wall was always on the alert for any attempt of an enemy to attack or infiltrate the city. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 2:11, Paul wrote that we are "not unaware" of the enemy's schemes. If praying watchmen are not on duty, we often fail to see the enemy's attempts to disrupt and destroy our churches and cities.

Second, I believe that as watchmen, we are also to keep our eyes open to see

and discern moves of God. The watcher should always be asking, "Lord, what are You doing in our church or city this day? Is there something You are calling Your people to do in cooperation with what You are doing?"

what results can we expect?

According to Isaiah, one of the results of the watchmen's prayers is that we will see the firm establishment of the Kingdom of God. The prophet speaks of the establishment of Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God among His people. In both the Old and the New Covenant, Jerusalem represents God among man. Jesus' main message was the coming Kingdom, present in Him. Emmanuel—God with us!

Another result of this powerful prayer movement is that the glory of God will be seen among the nations. As we watch and pray, we find ourselves lining up with the prophet Habakkuk and crying out for the glory of God to cover the earth "as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

Prayer warriors, it is time to ascend the walls of your city and begin to fulfill your calling as watchmen of God.

DAVE BUTTS is the chairman of America's National Prayer Committee.

I continue to search for the biblical response of wisdom and faith mingled together. Throughout my journey I have discovered that Jesus had a lot to say about this very subject. In fact, Jesus taught His disciples to "watch and pray."

What did Jesus say about how to live in the last days? Watch! (See Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.) I found that the word watch occurs 11 times in these three Gospels.

Wherever we are on God's timeline, we, as Jesus' disciples, have His command to watch with Him.

The beloved Apostle Paul echoed Jesus' mandate: "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful" (Col. 4:2). One key here is to walk in a sustained state of watching with prayer, even in the late-night shifts. Do it with thanksgiving. Or how about adding a little bit of praise? That will keep us going for sure.

My Personal History

This has been the case in my personal prayer life. For years, the Holy Spirit awakened me at 2:00 a.m. I would get up, go out to my living room, and sit in God's presence for a couple of hours. I did this for 20 straight years. Yes, it was a sacrifice. And yes, it became a delight!

Over the years, people have asked me questions about that time. "What did you do at 2:00 a.m.?" "Did you suffer from sleep deprivation?"

But I learned that if I do what God wants me to do (watch and pray) then I will be successful in what I want to do (sleep.) Quite frankly, this is how dreams and visions were unfolded to me. Quietness is the incubation bed of revelation. So visions came when I sat quietly with Him, and dreams came when I went back to bed resting in a sweet sleep.

As my understanding and experience grew, I found that I was watching, being on the alert and responding in prayer to whatever the Holy Spirit wanted to reveal to me. Like a nursing mother doing the night feeding, I cared for and nurtured

the burden of the Lord. Whatever was on His heart was on my heart. I was carrying His prayer concerns. These became lessons in not just praying to God, but praying with God. After all, Jesus ever lives to makes intercession (Heb. 7:25).

Eventually I learned that watching is to sleeping as fasting is to eating. That revelation gave me perspective. It is a sacrifice pleasing to the Lord. So as I continued my study, I found the phrase watch and pray in Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:38, which both declare, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

That statement is so true. My flesh is so weak and wants to check out! But hold on—as we look further, the benefits

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far outweigh the costs. Through watching and praying I receive grace to avoid temptation and maintain a pure walk with the Lord throughout the day.

specific watches in scripture

There are 24 hours in a day—and biblical watches were divided into three-hour segments. The following list includes only a few phrases used in the Word of God regarding various watches:

- Exodus 14:24: last watch of the night (the morning watch)
- Psalm 130:5-6: waiting for the morning
- Matthew 14:25; Mark 6:48: the fourth watch
- Acts 3:1: the hour of prayer; 3:00 p.m.—the ninth hour
- Daniel 6:10: three times daily— Daniel's custom
- Psalm 55:17: three times daily— David's prayers (evening, morning, and noon).

We, too, can observe different types of watches in prayer at various times. Could it be that these diverse strategic watches are appointed for specific people to keep? Yes! And often when people feel called to a prayer watch, each carries a specific theme.

One might be a devotional prayer watch. Another could be a time of revival intercession, reminding God of His promises and appointments not yet fulfilled. Another might be a spiritual warfare watch. Many people feel called to a governmental prayer watch or a crisisintervention watch. Some people set aside time for prophetic intercession. I always include an Israel prayer watch and one for evangelism when I pray to "the Lord of the harvest . . . to send workers into the harvest field" (Matt. 9:38). And of course youth and young adults, especially, love a worship watch!

God is creative and there is variety in these watches and prayer applications. I love the diversity in the Body of Christ and the way He gives various burdens or

assignments to His "watchmen on the walls." But what are the tasks of these spiritual watchmen?

- Isaiah 62:6-7: to remind the Lord day and night of His promises
- Luke 18:1, 7: to be persistent in prayer to avenge His elect
- Habakkuk 2:1: to watch and see what the Lord will say
- Proverbs 8:34–35: to listen, wait, and watch daily
- 1 Peter 4:7: to be alert and of sober
- 1 Peter 5:8: to be vigilant (grégoreó); to be alert to the enemy's schemes
- Revelation 3:2: to bring things from death to life.²

growth in the prayer **Movement**

God seems to be strategically calling His people to prayer watches as never before. A little more than a decade ago there were only a handful of Houses of Prayer in North America. Today, there are more than 10,000 Houses of Prayer that combine worship and distinct prayer themes per watch—including David's Tent in Washington, D.C., and the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, MO. In the United States numerous statewide solemn assemblies of prayer and fasting come under the umbrellas of The Response, Awakening America Alliance, OneCry, National Day of Prayer, Intercessors for America, The Jericho Center with Dick Eastman, and other ministries.

Last year we saw gatherings in both Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. (Azusa Now with Lou Engle and The Call, and Together 2016 with Pulse and hundreds of ministry partners) that gathered the Next Generation in launching millennial movements of prayer and evangelism. Evangelical statesman Franklin Graham hosted prayer rallies in every state capital in the nation, lifting up a cry for crisis intervention and revival in America.

In addition there are national and

international prayer networks and scores of local churches where prayer is at the center of everything they do. Ongoing Next Generation prayer movements include The Burn and Fire and Fragrance Schools.

This is good news for prayer warriors! There are new recruits constantly being trained. It is a new day with renewed momentum in the global worship and prayer movement!

a personal invitation to make history

I grew up hearing different versions of this statement: "When God is about to do a mighty new thing, He always sets His people praying" (attributed to Jonathan Edwards and other revivalists). If that is the case, then if we keep seeing growing numbers of watchmen on the walls we might just be on the brink of another Great Awakening.

God is choosing and appointing watchmen to make history before the throne of Almighty God. I don't plan to miss that appointment! I encourage you not to miss your opportunity either.

Surrender to the Lord to be a valiant prayer warrior, seizing your appointment. Write this date in your journal. Decide today that you will enlist—or possibly reenlist—as a spiritual watchman for the purposes of God in your generation. What a destiny and high calling!

¹The first watch is at sunset, 6:00 p.m., the second watch at 9:00 p.m., the third watch at 12:00 a.m. midnight, and the fourth watch at

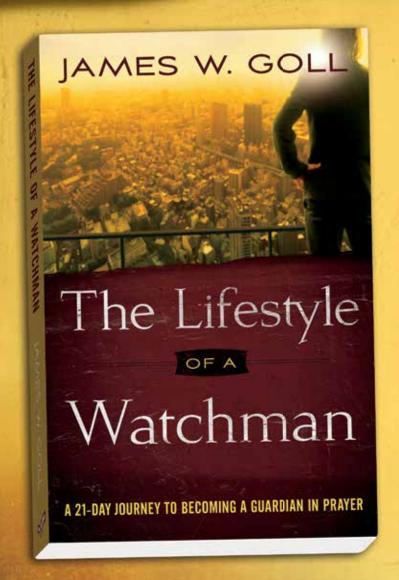
²I expand on these topics through curriculum and in my books: The Lost Art of Intercession, The Prophetic Intercessor, Prayer Storm, Prayer for Israel's Destiny, and The Call to the Elijah Revolution (encountersnetwork.com).



JAMES GOLL is president of Encounters Network and an instructor at the Wagner Leadership Institute. He is the author of numerous books, and is active in facilitating

unity in the Church, especially regarding revival and reformation.

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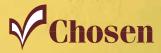
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watchman, what is LEFT OF THE NIGHT?

t was the best of times, it was the worst of times." The famous opening of Charles Dickens's novel *A Tale of Two Cities* is often used to highlight a time when seemingly radical opposites coexist. Dickens

continues, "It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity."

I thought of that line regarding my frustration with what I see in the *Ecclesia* (Church) in the United States today. We are living in a time of opposites or contradictions in our communication within the Ecclesia. According to what some respected prayer leaders believe, we are moving into the greatest time the American Church has ever experienced. Revival is coming. We need to repent and pray together and

then seize our destiny; we are standing on the verge of the greatest harvest in the history of the Church. This is what is coming—it is what God desires, they say.

Yet emails from other highly regarded prayer leaders contain stern warnings that the United States is moving into a time of judgment, persecution, and great hardship and that "even if Moses and Samuel stood before me pleading for these people, I wouldn't help them" (Jer. 15:1, NLT). They believe this is what is coming. Nothing is going to stop this judgment. It is going to occur—so get prepared.

These are radically opposite views from godly people of prayer who are, as the prophet Isaiah put it, "watchmen on [the] walls" (62:6). What are we to believe and how are we to pray in our current seemingly contradictory situation?

By Dale Schlafer

god is the watchman

As we look at the subject of watchmen on the walls, let's start with the foundational biblical truth that ultimately God is the watchman (Hosea 9:8). I sense that this obvious truth is often forgotten in many prayer meetings. People tend to pray for what they desire rather than what God is showing them. But Scripture says, "Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain" (Ps. 127:1).

We are not spinning out of control to some unknown end. God is the watchman over history, sovereignly directing the best and worst of times. The question for people of prayer is, are we listening to God or merely praying what we want?

In addition, God often invites prophets to be watchmen on the walls. The above quotation from Hosea expands this truth: "The prophet, along with my

God, is the watchman" (Hosea 9:8, italics added). The five-fold ministry gifts (listed in Ephesians 4:11-12) make it clear that the gift of prophet is available to the Ecclesia today. The gifts listed there are: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. Today these gifts are not only accepted but operational across a wide swath of the Ecclesia. Prophetic individuals therefore are essential in understanding what God is showing us and how and what we are to pray.

Peter, however, gives the entire Ecclesia the responsibility of being alert watchmen: "The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray" (1 Peter 4:7).

The entire Body of Christ has the responsibility to watch, and if you will, to act as watchmen. We are to observe what is transpiring around us and go to God to learn how to pray—or take what the prophets share and pray it through.

do the messages really conflict?

This foundational material still does not answer the issue I raised in the beginning. Scripture says, "If the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?" (1 Cor. 14:8, emphasis added). But respected watchmen on the walls today appear to be giving two conflicting messages. As a result, there is great confusion in the Ecclesia.

One group of watchmen says we are moving into the greatest days in the history of the American Church. The other says we are facing God's imminent judgment and very difficult days.

Having wrestled with this, I'm proposing something I believe the Lord has helped me grasp. In Isaiah 21:11-12 we read: "Watchman, what is left of the night? Watchman, what is left of the night?' The watchman replies, 'Morning is coming, but also the night." It sounds as though the watchman doesn't under-

But perhaps we are the ones who are confused. The morning is coming. There is going to be a great harvest of lost souls, spectacular displays of God's glory, and great healings to observe. At the same time, the watchman says "also the night."

I see that a time of great difficulty and hardship is also coming. The United States will go through great judgment that no amount of repentance, fasting, and prayer can restrain.

Could it be that the Lord wants us to recognize that when we see only one of the messages, we are receiving only part of what watchmen are to see? Could it be that God is saying we need both mindsets as we move closer to Christ's return?

Most of the prayer movement sees these two mindsets as linear and distinct, one scenario occurring after the other. But what if they are simultaneous?

HOW Then do we pray?

If this is true, then it changes how we



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pray. What if, biblically, we are to expect a mighty move of God in the midst of great darkness and judgment? What if we are indeed moving into a time of deep darkness but in the midst of it the light of Christ will shine more brightly? It seems to me that in places where deep darkness has fallen (China and Iraq, for example), there are also remarkable moves of salvations, healings, signs, and wonders in the midst of peril, persecution, and death.

When we, as prayer leaders, operate from just one of these mindsets, we tend to minister with the support of only those who agree with us. I confess to you that only a few months ago I hurled a magazine across the room when I read some words from a brother who holds a different mindset than I do. I said at the time, "What world is he living in? I am never reading anything he writes again!"

I have since repented of these words as the concept of simultaneous morning and night has changed my thinking. I sense linear thinking is where many in the prayer movement find themselves today. They may not hurl their magazines across the room, but they are similarly caught in the linear mindset and divided from others as I was. This causes great division in the prayer movement, which in turn causes great confusion in the Body because the watchmen appear in opposition to each other.

If it is hard to imagine the morning and night simultaneously, consider China. In 1949, at the time of the Communist takeover, the population was 546 million, of which 800,000 were Protestants and three million were Catholics. Groups that monitor growth of religions around the world project that by the year 2030 there will be approximately 247 million Catholics and Protestants in China. This will make China the country with the most Christians.

Suppose the Ecclesia of China in 1949 had determined that they were in the "worst of times" with persecution, peril, and darkness. And suppose that as a result, they determined to just hunker down and ride it out until God decided to bring the "best of times"? They would have missed what is arguably the greatest harvest up to now in the history of the Ecclesia.

Instead they simultaneously understood the difficulties of persecution and the opportunities of harvest.

prepared both ways

So what does that mean for us as watchmen? Jesus made clear to us in the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1–13) that we need to be *prepared*.

- Be prepared for the best of times. See that the Body is trained, discipled, and ready for the great Kingdom harvest.
- Simultaneously, be prepared for the worst of times. See that the Body is

prepared for darkness, peril, persecution, and death.

To choose only one mindset is to leave the Ecclesia unprepared, unready, and in danger of missing her destiny.

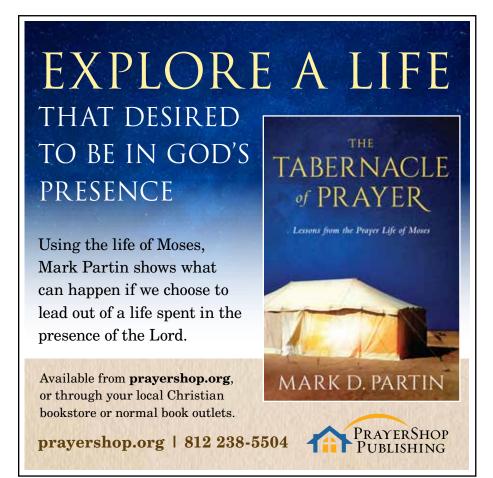
God is the watchman over it all, so let's keep praying according to His heart. "Watchman, what is left of the night?"

The watchman replies, "Morning is coming, but also the night."

¹Fenggang Yang, professor of sociology at Purdue University and author of *Religion in China: Survival and Revival under Communist Rule*, quoted in *The Telegraph (telegraph.co.ukl news)* September 18, 2016.



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YOUR PLACE ON THE WALL



hat does the future hold for the United States of America? Last year was full of political turmoil, civil unrest, and continued moral decline. Now the national

elections are history, the country has a new president, both the House and Senate show new faces, and believers are poised for new possibilities.

Many Christians are taking stock and perhaps evaluating where intercessory prayer will fit into the Church's strategy in 2017. How are we to watch and pray?

GOOD HOLDS Nations Accountable

Israel's history during Isaiah's prophetic ministry offers us biblical lessons for our own day. The spiritual climate of Judah (the nation of Israel's Southern Kingdom) during Isaiah's early life was good. Kings Uzziah and Jotham both led Judah to follow God. As a nation, Judah remained true to Yahweh for a period, but everything changed with King Ahaz.

Ahaz committed terrible atrocities before the Lord. He defiled the temple, placed altars on street corners, and lived in open rebellion toward God. Ultimately Judah was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar and spent 70 years in Babylonian captivity.

Isaiah's ministry took place in the midst of moral, spiritual, and cultural decline. In his early ministry (Isa. 1), the nation is accused accurately and justly, based upon the laws of God. Then Judah's idolatry is described with judicial precision (Isa. 2–5), stating the case in a manner that can only lead to one verdict: "Guilty."

By David Kubal

Isaiah was faithful to warn Judah and prophesy God's message even though God told him his ministry would not be outwardly successful (Isa. 6:8-12). Isaiah was called to speak the truth; the people were accountable for their rejection of the message.

What could be a more timely and relevant scene than this for today's intercessors?

After a brief interlude, Isaiah's prophetic judgments continue in chapters 10-34, this time not against God's people but against surrounding nations.

This is particularly important for Christians in America to understand. I have found few American Christians who have a clear sense of our collective standing before God. Many define their identity as, "my personal relationship with Christ," or "I go to a good church." This is as far as it goes.

Understanding that we have both an individual standing before God and a collective standing before God is vital to keeping a proper, honest, and Godsanctioned loyalty to both connections, giving each what is due.

Returning to the examples in Isaiah's day, the principle of all nations' accountability before God is clear. God says, "I will take vengeance in anger and wrath on the nations that have not obeyed me" (Micah 5:15, emphasis added).

God is justified in doing this because He is God. Romans 1 declares that all mankind has a sense of the Creator's existence and His standards. He will punish nations. It does not matter if they are ruled by dictators, kings, parliaments, or Congress.

We must be aware and accept that God holds nations accountable for their collective actions. He will bless or hold a nation accountable based upon His laws. He is justified in doing this relying on the principle of general revelation we read about in Romans, that all of us have a sense of our Creator's desires. (See Romans 1:18-23.) God will punish the nations and the world for its evil.

Isaiah prophesies against godless nations that surround him, including Assyria, Babylon, Moab, and Egypt. These are nations that bear the guilt of their collective decisions. Isaiah records the following judgments:

- Assyria: "I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes" (10:12).
- Babylon: "See, the day of the LORD is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it" (13:9).
- Moab: "We have heard of Moab's pride—how great is her arrogance!" (16:6).
- Egypt: "The Egyptians will lose heart, and I will bring their plans to nothing; they will consult the idols and the spirits of the dead, the mediums and the spiritists" (19:3).
- All: "The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt" (24:5-6).

The point? We should do all we can to keep watch, including prayer for those in authority. And why do we do that? So that the Church can continue to preach the gospel, knowing God "wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

our sin is great

We are mistaken if we believe that God does not deal with nations for their collective action. Whether they are ruled by dictators or by Congress—God holds nations accountable. As Americans we typically have a very individualistic approach to life: "As long as I am walking in obedience, I'm good. I don't have responsibility for the nation I live in. And I certainly will not reap any negative

effects because of ungodly politicians."

These typical points of view are not biblical. We are called to walk with the Lord as individuals, but we as a nation also have a standing before God. Christians cannot be blind to the fact that God sees us as a nation of people. He holds our nation responsible for the laws and decisions of our country, positioning us for either His blessing or His judgment.

The sin of our nation is great. We have killed nearly 60 million innocent babies. In 2015 the Supreme Court used its power to "redefine" the institution of marriage, which God created to be the building block of humanity. Pornography is prolific. And in some jurisdictions, a male may walk into a women's restroom if he feels like a female, thus threatening the modesty, privacy, and security of women and young girls.

The list of offenses against logic, wisdom, and Almighty God goes on and on. We are guilty. We call wrong, right. In arrogance our leaders devise wickedness while decreeing that anything pertaining to God is not welcome in the public arena.

Yet only 12 percent of American Christians regularly pray for our government officials.¹

watchmen will repent

Instead of expecting revival, we Christians should be expecting divine discipline. We cry out, "Bless us, oh, Lord," while we should be, instead, prostrating ourselves, crying out in repentance. We expect God to bring revival, even when we do not value His truth. We read the promises of God and expect Him to fulfill them today, instead of weeping over the judgments of Scripture that match our very condition.

We cry out, "Where are you, God?" when 30 percent of all Internet searches every day are for porn. One porn site gets four billion page views in one month!2

Perhaps God has not brought revival to our county for the very reason that we expect it. There is no remorse. We are not sorry in a way that matches the level of our collective guilt. We don't need intercessors for America as much as we need mourners for America.

As Isaiah looked at his nation, he understood the depths of the depravity of his day. He didn't cry out, "Lord, bring Your blessing." He cried out, "Woe to me! . . . I am ruined!" (Isa. 6:5).

He was able to look into the heart of God and see God's extreme holiness compared with his utter brokenness. He was unable to ask for a blessing because he saw a holy God "high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. . . . and [the seraphim] were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory'" (Isa. 6:1–3).

Isaiah was shaken to his core with the sight of God's holiness and his own brokenness. His only response: "I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty" (6:5).

Is it possible that God has not brought revival to our county because we expect Him to do so, as though we were entitled to that grace? Perhaps God is waiting for His people to show greater remorse and repentance on behalf of the nation. The larger Church also appears to lack deep contrition. Historically, intercession has included a sense of mourning over our personal and collective sins.

Blessings released through watchful prayer

Isaiah's vision of a holy God led to one conclusion: his nation was doomed. Yet out of the ashes of debauchery, God raised up King Hezekiah—a very different man than his father Ahaz. Hezekiah dedicated the priesthood to holiness, reinstituted the sacrificial system, and reintroduced praise to the temple. Holiness, sacrifice, and

praise—a good prescription for proper orientation to the Lord.

But Hezekiah was not unchallenged. We read in Isaiah 37 about the potential attack from Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Hezekiah went to the temple and laid this impending crisis before the Lord. Then we read in Isaiah 37:21 one of the most encouraging passages in Scripture about our calling to pray: "Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Because you have prayed to me. . . . ""

The passage then goes on to describe in prophetic detail the blessings God promised His people because Hezekiah prayed.

Can you imagine what would happen in this country if the Church came together with holy hands, sacrificial fasting, and the worship of God in a way that brought unity and a desire only for God's glory? This is what it takes for a nation to be healed. Watchful, desperate prayer is what it will take for certain blessings to be released.

Our nation has been through so much over the past year. Let us remember that God holds nations accountable. And let's approach Him with an accurate understanding of our guilt before Him, realizing He desires us to join Him in shaping history through prayer.

¹Max Lucado, Lifeway Survey, *christianitytoday*. *com*, (October 2014).

²The Huffington Post, huffingtonpost.com, (May 4, 2013).



DAVE KUBAL is president of Intercessors for America (*ifapray.org*), a ministry founded in 1973 to focus on prayer and fasting for the nation. He is also a member

of America's National Prayer Committee.

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Staying Alert in a Iroubled World

BIBLE STUDY

Note: This Bible study is formatted for small group open discussion. If you use this study by yourself, we suggest you journal your answers to the discussion questions. Also, please use suggested translations where indicated. Biblegateway.com is an excellent source for translations you may not have on hand.

y the time you read this, we will have witnessed, or soon will witness, the inauguration of the next president of the United States. But today as I write, the election is still a few weeks off. I have deep concerns about the future of our nation. So I have joined with thousands of others in fasting and

praying for the 40 days leading up to Election Day.*

Desperation drives me to my watch post every morning. Because I am desperate, it is not difficult for me to wake up before the sun does and go to the place where I pray. So much is at stake in this election—not just for the United States but for the world. So I take my position on the wall and pray.

As I interceded this morning, the Spirit of God caught me off guard. It's good that you are dedicated to being a watchman now. But will you remain as dedicated once the election is over?

Good question. He's good at those.

So now, friends, by the time you read this, the election will indeed be over. We will have a new president. But for many voters, our new chief of state is just "the lesser of two evils." The election solved nothing. The issues of poverty, unemployment, terrorism, immorality, illegal immigration, racial tensions, foreign relations, and all the rest of it, have not gone away.

What that says to me—what I believe the Spirit was saying to me through His question—is that we need to watch and pray now more than ever! Our assignments as watchmen are not over just because the election is—our assignments are just beginning!

Discussion questions

James Goll writes, "Each of us has been chosen to be a watchman of the Lord in this generation." Review the tasks of watchmen that he draws from the Scriptures listed on p. 14. Which ones do you already do? Which ones would you like to become stronger at doing? Can you think of specific ways you could grow as a watchman for your nation?

God sent the prophet Isaiah to warn King Hezekiah of judgment that was coming to Israel. Read Isaiah 39:5–8. What did Isaiah say would happen? How did Hezekiah respond to his prophecy? What attitudes are displayed in such a response? If you ever found yourself in a similar situation in the future, how would you like to respond?

David Kubal discusses the great sins of our nation, including the sins of abortion, pornography, and sexual immorality. But these are not the only sins that grieve God and incite His judgment. Read Isaiah 58. What

| sins of Israel grieved God? What remedy did He call for? How might this be relevant to God's people in America today? | | Do you sense God calling you to serve on a watchman post daily? Weekly? Monthly? For a 40-day season? Or some other designated time? Record the day(s) and time(s) of your watchman shifts here: |
|---|--|---|
| Jeremiah 29:1–23 describes the manner in which God meant for His people to live during a time of severe hardship in Israel's history. They were exiled in Babylon, far from the land God had given them, subjugated to a pagan despot. How do these verses illustrate the principle Dale Schlafer suggests—that we can be simultaneously prepared for both the best of times and the worst of times? What applications can you think of for God's people today? | Action steps First, to build your faith, pray the Scriptures about who God is and what He does. Choose one to memorize so that you can pray it as needed. Write it out here: | For what specific people and needs of your community, nation, and the world is He giving you as an intercession assignment? |
| | | *I did my 40-day watch using a guide provided by Every Home for Christ (ehc.org/prayer). CYNTHIA HYLE BEZEK is editorial director for Community Bible Study (communitybiblestudy.org). She has worked in Christian publishing for more than 20 years. |
| Goll points out that much of the last-days teaching we hear is fear-inducing rather than faith-building. What does God tell us not to fear, according to the following passages? Circle the ones that you relate to most: Numbers 14:9; Deuteronomy 20:3; Isaiah 8:12, 51:7, 54:4; Jeremiah 42:11, 51:46; Ezekiel 2:3–6; 1 Peter 3:14. | Then, sign up for some watchman shifts. PRAYER FOR A STATE OF THE STA | RITHE FIRST |

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What truths about who God is and what He does do you find in the following verses that can help to counter such fears? 2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 138:3; Isaiah 12:2, 41:10, 52:12; 2 Corinthians 4:16; 2 Timothy 1:7.



DD JEST REST RESPONDERS

hen tragedy strikes, we all look for help.

We believe the vast majority of the U.S. population appreciates and honors those trained to provide crisissituation help—protection, medical care, or rescue. Yet we also witness our authorities under attack. Growing misunderstandings and distrust can severely affect our first responders.

In a day of global unrest and terrorism it is important that we pray for our police, fire, and medical response teams.

STRATEGIC PRAYERS

Here are ten ways to bless and cover our first responders in prayer. Each point includes Scriptures and a prayer. We encourage you to develop your own prayers based on both the verses and the written prayers.

Give thanks to the Lord for those who often put their lives on the line for others.

1 Peter 4:11: "If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ."

Colossians 1:3: "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you."

Father, we are so blessed to have men and women who work diligently for our safety and well-being, even when their jobs are difficult and often thankless. Help us remember to thank You for their sacrifices and

BY DAVE AND KIM BUTTS

service to our community. May we touch heaven with prayers of gratitude whenever we see or personally encounter first responders. Give them the strength that You provide so that as they serve, You will be honored.

Pray for spiritual salvation for first responders, and a faith in Christ to sustain them in the face of danger.

1 Timothy 2:1-4: "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

Psalm 27:1: "The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?"

Lord Jesus, we pray for first responders everywhere who have not yet made You their Lord and Savior. Please put Your people in their paths, so that they might learn to seek You first and honor You. It's so important to have godly men and women in these positions of influence for the sake of Your Kingdom. We also pray that You will intervene in the lives of those who once knew You well but have fallen away from You due to the pressures of their jobs. Reignite their hearts with passion for all that You are, Lord Jesus! Stir people all over our nation to pray fervently that our first responders will be salt and light in dark places and beacons of hope to the hopeless. Help them to minister in a very difficult occupation so that they might be change agents for the sake of Your name!

Pray for their protection and safety because many first responders are in situations of significant danger.

Isaiah 54:17: "No weapon forged against you will prevail."

Psalm 91:1-4, 14-16: "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

"Because he loves me,' says the LORD, 'I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Gracious God, first responders have such dangerous jobs! Help them to dwell in Your shadow. May You always be their refuge in difficult situations. May they trust in You completely, moment by moment. Show them Your power when they find themselves in unsafe situations or when they face people who threaten to harm them. Keep them safe for the glory of Your name!

Pray for wisdom and discernment as they face every crisis. Pray for increased skill and effectiveness in their daily tasks of coming to the aid of others.

2 Chronicles 20:12: "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

Psalm 5:8: "Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies make your way straight before me."

Lord, every day first responders have to make difficult and complicated decisions. Help them to choose wisely and well in every situation. Give them clarity and help them to stay calm and collected in the most tense moments they face. Help them call out to You whenever they don't know what to do. May they always keep their eyes fixed upon You.

Pray for courage and strength as they enter harm's way.

Joshua 1:9: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Zechariah 4:6: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty."

Father, every shift first responders' work requires them to be prepared and ready for whatever comes. Give them the ability to stand strong. Fill them with courage. Help them to be aware of Your presence and see their need for You in every challenging situation.

Pray for vigilance as they keep watch. Ask God to give them confidence in their abilities to help others.

Psalm 130:5-6: "I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the LORD more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning."

Mark 14:38: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Father, as our first responders watch over us and respond to the needs in our community, please keep them alert and always ready. Keep them sharp, confident, and prepared in every way. May they place their hope in Your Word and wait upon You.

Pray for emotional protection for first responders, that the Father would guard their hearts, especially in the face of criticism or anger from others.

Galatians 6:9-10: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

Philippians 4:5–7: "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Father, please keep our first responders emotionally strong but spiritually tender when they are confronted by the evil and brokenness around them. Give them Your peace as they deal with the pain and suffering of others—and at times experience injustice. May they have compassion for those whose lives are broken and may they demonstrate kindness to them. Help them to recognize that when others express hate and anger toward them, they can find their security in You.

Pray that the words and deeds of every believing first responder will reflect the life of Jesus Christ in every situation.

Psalm 141:3: "Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips."

Psalm 19:14: "May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer."

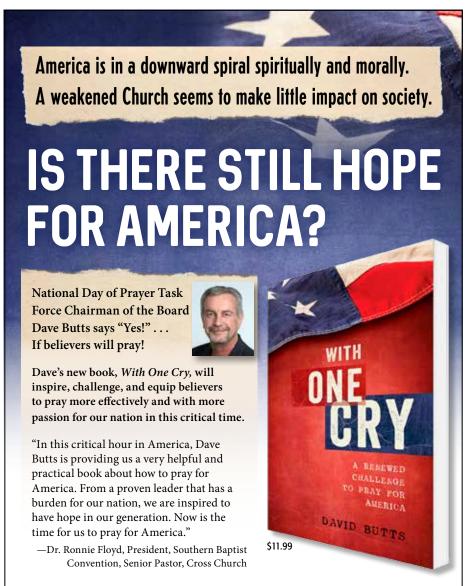
Father, give words and actions to Your people who serve their community as first responders. Even in the most intense situations, we ask that they will look to You to show them how to react and what to say. May they bring honor to You and be godly examples to their unbelieving coworkers and to others with whom they interact on a daily basis.

Pray for peace for the first responders' family members who are aware of the dangers their loved ones face. Ask God to guard their marriage and family relationships.

Ephesians 5:31–33: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." . . . each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

Isaiah 26:3 – "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you."

Lord God, the families of first responders experience so much stress and fear. As a result many marriages among first responders are broken and the divorce rate is high. Bring Your peace to their families, Lord. Help these men and women to keep their eyes fixed upon You so that they might love their spouses as You have instructed, and so that they might



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train up their children in godly ways. Help them to find quality and quantity time with their families.

Pray they will feel supported and loved by their communities.

1 Peter 5:6–7: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Romans 13:7: "Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor."

> Lord God Almighty, help us to show our first responders how much they are appreciated. May these brave men and women know that their God and their community supports them and cares for them! Give us

ways to demonstrate our gratitude and thankfulness for their difficult sacrifices every day.

ADDING ACTION TO YOUR PRAYERS

There are other specific ways that you can express support for first responders:

- Establish a Shield-A-Badge prayer team for first responders in your church or community. This program is designed to pray strategically for police officers (shield-a-badge.org).
- Check out what the city of Omaha is doing through their First Responders Foundation. Their mission is to enhance public safety and build community appreciation and respect for first responders by providing resources (firstrespondersomaha.org/ foundation).
- Find practical ways to show your

appreciation to first responders and their families. This Pinterest board is filled with great ideas (pinterest.com/ erinw27/first-responder-appreciation).

Thank the first responders when you come into contact with them. Tell them how much you appreciate what they do every day—and ask how you can pray for them. If they are receptive, ask permission to do it right then! Pray that God will use first responders to bring peace and security to our families and communities.



DAVE AND KIM **BUTTS** are co-founders of Harvest Prayer Ministries. They are the authors of several books (available at prayershop.

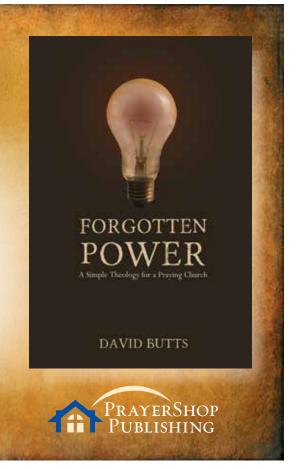
org). Dave is also the chairperson of America's National Prayer Committee. This article is adapted from their prayer guide for first responders.

Tap into the POWER!

"Much power has been ignored by the Church because of its failure in the area of prayer." -David Butts

Forgotten Power is a must read for pastors, elders, church board members—anyone who leads in a church. It is time that leaders understand the importance of prayer and what can happen if it is put into practice in their church. Use it as a discussion starter in your church.

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A GOOD TIME TO BEGIN:

Set a reminder alarm to pray daily at 20:20 (8:20 p.m.) Pray the words of Matthew 9:37-38, and pray, "Lord, MOLD our hearts to be one with Your heart. MULTIPLY our lives through others. MOBILIZE laborers through prayer and ministry efforts."



Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.'" — Matthew 9:37-38

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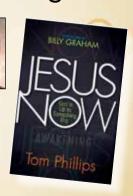




JANUARY 1-22 9PM-10:30PM EST

Call in each night to join other believers from across the country and the world to pray for a Great Awakening!

This initiative is in conjunction with the book Jesus Now by Tom Phillips, Vice President at BGEA. Sign-up online to receive a daily email during the Virtual Prayer Meeting with a devotion from the book, as well as, guest line-up, call announcements and updates.

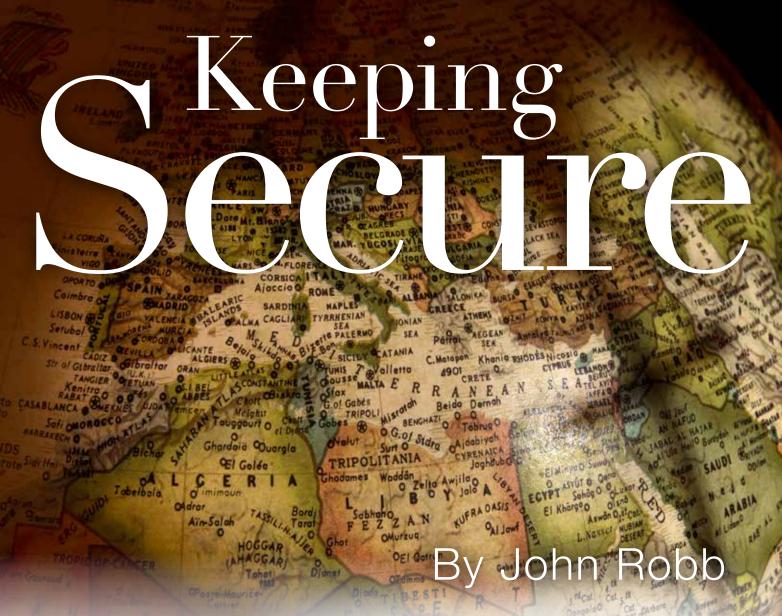


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It was August 1995, in war-torn Bosnia. A Bosnian pastor asked me, "Are you and your ministry team willing to share our reality?"

I asked what he meant by "our reality."

He replied, "Are you willing to drive through the snipers with us?"

Danger, when cars were firebombed and few peo-

Immediately I had visions of the Harrison Ford movie, Clear and Present

W()RL ple escaped. However, because my colleagues and I knew we were in the Lord's hands and on His mission to facilitate a peacemaking prayer initiative, of Terrorism

How to Be Wise and Pray Confidently

and because thousands were in prayer for the nation, we drove north with our Bosnian friends. As we passed an area with Sarajevan snipers, we sang hymns and prayed, feeling confidence, assurance, and peace while keeping focused on the Prince of Peace.

Peace in Chaos

Since that time, in my past work with World Vision (an international humanitarian organization) and now with the International Prayer Council, I have found myself in harm's way on numerous occasions. Colleagues and I have passed through the territory of Rwanda's murderous "genocidaires" in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have been chased and targeted for death by the Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan. We have experienced other unstable and dangerous situations of civil war and scary travel conditions. Inexplicably, from a human point of view, we have again and again felt Christ's peace and confidence in such situations.

Today we live in an increasingly chaotic and insecure world. A lone wolf gunman in Orlando, FL, with ideological commitments to ISIS, shoots more than 100 nightclub-goers. That got our attention. There have been similar attacks in Boston, MA, and San Bernardino, CA. And we have seen international incidents in Paris, Brussels, and Istanbul. Many additional radical Muslim-motivated attacks in the Middle East and other parts of the world often go unreported here in the West unless they are epic in scale.

Our new reality is that our public gathering places such as shopping malls, athletic events, and church services are likely to be targeted in the near future. How are we as believers in the Lord to respond with both faith and wisdom, not allowing such a possibility to paralyze us?

My son-in-law, a professor of history, said, "I am pretty sure Jesus wouldn't want us to take guns to church . . . I don't want to live in fear."

That reaction probably captures what many think about the issue of security. But what is a reasonable precaution to take in protecting ourselves? And what does Scripture have to say about living securely? The Psalms, of course, encourage us to live confidently because "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). We are reminded in Deuteronomy 33:27 that God will drive out our enemies and that "underneath are the everlasting arms." And God "will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on [Him]" (Isa. 26:3, кJv).

Stay Alert to Evil

Still, bad things can and do happen to good people. In Charleston, SC, a white racial supremacist walked into a Bible study and assassinated—at point-blank range—an African American pastor and eight of his parishioners. No one in this world is immune from violence, not even devoted Christians.

A couple decades ago, while my family and I were living in the Los Angeles area, we heard the traumatic account of how a disgruntled man walked up to a local pastor, who was preaching, and shot him dead. By God's mercy, as the gunman turned to begin shooting others, an off-duty police officer, who had her handgun with her, took the killer down with one shot fired across the room over the heads of the congregation.

Such experiences are still fairly rare and probably will not happen to the great majority of us, but they can cripple us with a sense of foreboding. Should we go to that concert or mass prayer gathering? Could an attack happen there? Such thinking may keep us from living joyously and freely.

But the other side of the Lord's affirmation of His watch-care over His people is Scripture's urging that we be watchful and alert because of the reality of rampant evil in our world. Peter portrays the devil as a prowling lion ready to devour those who are unaware and fail to resist him (1 Peter 5:8). Jesus did

not entrust Himself to anyone because he knew what was in the human heart (John 2:24). Instead, He told us to watch and pray to avoid temptation and the destructive snares that come through it (Matt. 26:41).

Faith requires us to put our lives and future in the hands of the Lord. Wisdom requires that we make practical provision for good security.

A Balanced Approach

For individual believers, what wise and faith-filled approach can we implement in our daily family life, work environment, and general activities?

- 1. Pray at the beginning of your day, asking for God's guidance and protection as you go about your daily
- 2. Keep alert, listening to His voice. As Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27, KJV). Be sensitive to inner red flags about your plans and activities. God may be redirecting you to protect you from an unknown threat.
- 3. Pray God's protection over your home, family, church, community, and nation. Pray for the authorities to be vigilant and careful in carrying out their duties at the federal, state, and local levels, especially to guard against terrorist schemes.
- 4. Be aware of your surroundings and be alert for any suspicious activity that could threaten you or others. Report such activities to law enforcement. We are our brother's keepers!

For pastors and elders, what should your approach be? Since you have authority over God's flock, you also have a responsibility before Him to implement good security precautions and procedures for your congregation. Don't assume that everything will be OK while we are in church.

Recently while I was preaching in my own home church, a strange man who was



visiting stood up in the middle of the message. Disturbed by something I said, he began to speak loudly from the back pew where he was sitting. From the pulpit I urged him to hold his peace until we could hear him out after the service. But he continued to rail away at me until one of the ushers escorted him out. We're thankful that the incident ended peacefully. But what if the guy had pulled out a gun to express his animosity and began shooting?

Fortunately, our church has a layman who is armed, with concealed-carry authorization. He was alert and prepared to intervene had the visitor gotten out of hand. What about your congregation? Are you prepared if a Muslim jihadist or someone with psychotic tendencies decides to harm you or your people? As caretakers for His flock, leaders need to be prepared for such an event. We hope it never comes about, but it could happen in today's new reality of unpredictable violence.

Leaders, here are some additional ways to watch over your congregation:

- 1. Take reasonable physical precautions when arranging public events and during usual church activities. Make sure that someone is keeping alert and tasked with maintaining safety and security. It could be a security guard, off-duty police officer, or church member who has been well trained and is authorized to carry a firearm.
- 2. Ask the prayer group and congregation as a whole to pray not only for the security of your church, but also for your city, its law enforcement officials, and police officers. Our church recently hosted the top brass of our police department for "Coffee with a Cop" so we could get to know them and pray for them with greater understanding and empathy.
- 3. Set an example for your congregation in prayer. Lead them during worship services and other public occasions to pray for your community's protection. Lead them in prayer for government and intelligence officials. And lead them in praying

about the security threats we face as a country. Here are some of the current concerns that we as Christ's people should be praying about:

- Our own growing wickedness as a society
- Ineptness and corruption of our government
- ISIS, Al Qaeda, and radical Islam
- Russia and China expanding their influence and upgrading their nuclear forces
- North Korea under the erratic and dangerous Kim Jong-un
- Cyberattacks and an Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP) attack, which have the potential to disable national defense and infrastructure.

True Security

Let us all heed the same urgent call that God gave Ezekiel, to "stand in the gap" for our country in her time of increasing need and intensifying danger (Ezek. 22:30, кJv). Truly, intercessors uniting in prayer are the first and last line of defense for a nation.

As theologian Walter Wink famously asserted, "History belongs to the intercessors who believe the future into being." May we all be used of God to reshape the future history of the USA through our heartfelt and faith-filled praying, trusting the Lord to be faithful to answer our cries.

Finally, all of us need to be ready for that time when we will exchange our lives here for ones of eternal glory and splendor in the presence of Jesus Christ. Until that time, we should not give way to fear.

Instead, through prayerfully living and abiding in the peace, joy, and comfort of His presence, we will experience the only real security possible for "our reality" in today's world.



JOHN ROBB is chairman of the International Prayer Council (ipcprayer.org) and a member of America's National Prayer Committee.

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Developing Praying Men

hrist Community Church of Brazil, IN, a congregation of 150, has discovered a way to encourage a strong core of its men to pray for the church.

At a men's breakfast last year, Pastor Rich Laskowski spoke on the importance of men actively participating in prayer. He then asked the men to commit to doing something unique every Sunday morning, five minutes before the worship service. Now it has become a regular practice.

Each Sunday morning just before the service begins, several men walk to the front of the sanctuary and raise both hands. This signals a call to all the men present. Immediately a larger group of men responds by coming forward, getting into groups of four or five, and praying for the morning service.

They pray for the power of the Holy

Spirit, for the Lord's presence to be evident, for an anointing on the worship and spoken Word, and for the kids' ministry going on at the same time as the service. All the prayers focus on what takes

place that morning. This is not a time to pray for personal needs, the community, or other agenda items.

At the breakfast last year, Pastor Rich gave the men a laminated card with a written prayer to help them get started. No one uses the card now because everyone has become comfortable praying without it.

Each week, this congregation watches as 10 to 15 men storm the gates of heaven in united prayer at the front



of the church. The prayer time has been so successful that the groups now start forming about ten minutes ahead of the service, instead of five, to allow more time to pray.

To start a similar practice in your church, plan a special event when your pastor and leadership can explain the men's role in prayer for your church, provide prayer points as an example of how to pray, and challenge the men to step up. Many men will rise to the occasion if they are given a specific prayer agenda and a plea from your pastor for men to take ownership.

JONATHAN GRAF is publisher of *Prayer Connect*.

New App: 31 Ways to Pray for Your Kids

n article and bookmark by Robert Hostetler, entitled "31 Ways to Pray for Your Kids," has been used by parents, grandparents, teachers, pastors, and others around the world. It has been translated into Korean, Spanish, and Swahili. These effective prayers for your children can now be accessed quickly and easily on your iPhone or iPad!

This new app provides a short Biblebased prayer and supporting Scripture for every day of the month. You can set a daily reminder at a specific time to pray for your children, grandchildren, or other children in your life.

Here are some examples of daily prayers:

- Honesty and integrity: "May integrity and honesty be their virtue and their protection" (Ps. 25:21).
- Self-control: "Father, help my children not to be like many others around them, but let them be alert and self-controlled in all they do" (1 Thess. 5:6).
- Love for God's Word: "May my children grow to find Your Word more precious than much pure gold and sweeter than honey from the comb" (Ps. 19:10).
- Faithfulness: "Let love and faithfulness never leave my children, but bind these twin virtues around their necks and write them on the tablets of their hearts" (Prov. 3:3).





Go to your app store or itunes.apple. com and search for "31 Ways to Pray for Your Kids." The cost is 99 cents. For more information on the app and other prayer resources, go to bobhostetler.com.

Will You Pray with Us?

We value you as a subscriber and consider you a member of our intercessory prayer team. We are grateful for your prayers as we seek to encourage Kingdom-building prayer.

• The editorial staff (Dave and Kim Butts, Jonathan Graf, and Carol Madison) will be in San Diego the last week of January for meetings of both the Denominational Prayer Leaders Network and America's National Prayer Committee. This is a key time of reporting, strategizing, and listening for God's direction in the national prayer movement. It is also an important networking opportunity to connect with prayer leaders who are potential authors for future issues of *Prayer Connect*. Both of these groups are sponsors of the magazine, so please pray that their ownership will increase and circulation

- will grow. Pray for uplifting conversations, helpful ideas, and continued direction for the future of the magazine.
- These meetings are also an important time to connect with national prayer ministries about advertising in the magazine. We depend on advertising revenue to pay for the printing of the magazine, so please pray for favor for Jonathan Graf as he connects with prayer leaders and potential advertisers.
- Pray for Dave Butts as he leads the meetings as the chairman of America's National Prayer Committee.
 The coming year will be very strategic for our nation, and these prayer leaders will be praying and seeking to discern God's voice together.

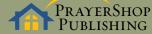
Become a Praying Church One Step at a Time!

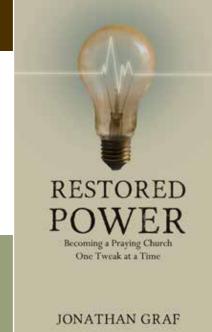
Using his 20 years of experience helping churches grow in prayer, author Jonathan Graf provides down to earth suggestions to put your church on the path toward becoming a "house of prayer." *Restored Power* will encourage you as it provides manageable ways to tweak, stimulate, and motivate prayer in your congregation.

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PRAYERLEADER

Encouragement for Prayer Mobilizers

Indicators of a Praying Church By Carol Madison

enjoy getting together once a month with a group of men and women who are just like me: they lead the prayer ministries in their churches and are eager to connect with others of like mind, heart, and assignment. We share resources, exchange ideas for prayer initiatives, and pray together. We try to stay apprised of the various local and national calls to prayer so that we might invite our congregations to participate.

Yet we are different in our emphases. Justin is particularly passionate about mentoring and mobilizing men in his church to pray with a worship focus. Valerie has developed an effective drivethrough prayer ministry in her community. Andrea oversees a ministry that helps people with healing kinds of prayer. I am especially engaged in mentoring a younger generation in prayer.

Whenever someone shares an idea or successful prayer initiative, I think to myself, Hey, we should do that. Any of these prayer ideas and initiatives would enhance my church's prayer ministry. But as the director of prayer ministries, I have the responsibility of launching prayer initiatives that best fit our congregation—initiatives that God confirms He wants us to do.

Praying Church Indicators

So what does a praying church look like? Are there some common indicators that can help prayer leaders move in the right direction without trying to be like every other church?

A few years ago, I served on the Prayer First team, the denominational prayer ministry for Converge Worldwide. The team came up with a definition and description of a praying church that offers prayer leaders some general goals.

With special thanks to Dana Olson (pastor of Faith Baptist Fellowship of Sioux Falls, SD), here is our definition: A praying church is humbled, desperate, and hopeful in prayer, with a focus on worshipping Jesus Christ and praying Kingdomminded prayers.

We also developed a list of specific indicators of a praying church:

- A praying church is led by a praying pastor who has a heart to see the church become "a house of prayer for all people."
- A praying church encourages its members to establish personal and family prayer in their homes.
- A praying church establishes a "rhythm of prayer" on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis. Weekly and monthly prayer gatherings undergird the concerns and ministry needs of the church. A quarterly prayer gathering seeks to incorporate greater numbers of church members. A yearly prayer gathering may include praying with other like-minded churches for revival and evangelism.
- A praying church has a systematic way of praying for pastors and its leaders through the use of email or other prayer updates. This could include prayer teams designated for each staff member and elder, with a commitment to pray regularly for that leader.
- A praying church has a designated room or space as a "prayer room" that is resourced with helpful prayer tools. This prayer room can be used for prayer during services, special 24hour seasons of prayer, small group prayer gatherings, or individual prayer times.
- · A praying church offers regular prayer training opportunities to teach and

- model key prayer principles.
- A praying church recognizes intercessors who are especially gifted in prayer by identifying, equipping, and mobilizing them to pray in ways that acknowledge their unique gifting. It makes use of intercessors in strategic ways and develops prayer groups to encourage particular passions.
- A praying church makes effective use of social media and other communication to keep its members motivated and informed in prayer.
- A praying church engages in strategic prayer evangelism for the community, nation, and the world. This could include prayerwalking neighborhoods, adopting unreached people groups, praying for the nations, supporting missionaries in prayer—or any other way of praying toward the harvest.
- A praying church is connected to other national prayer initiatives.
- A praying church has a goal of motivating at least 50 percent of its congregation to some form of active prayer. It is a measurable prayer goal that is kept before pastoral staff.
- •A praying church prays regularly for other churches, and is willing to mentor and encourage them in prayer.

You may not hit every one of these points, but keeping these goals in mind can help you, as a prayer leader, to move your church closer to being identified as a praying church—as God is uniquely calling you.



CAROL MADISON is editor of Prayer Connect magazine and director of prayer ministries at Hillside Church of Bloomington, MN.

CLASSICS

Time-tested Truths



Lord, Teach Us to Pray | By O. Hallesby

ow do you dare to pray, "Lord, teach me to pray"? That is right, be honest. You are afraid of trials and afflictions. And I believe that both you and I are willing to admit that we are also afraid of God. Pure instinct seems to tell us that God is going to deal harshly with us.

And the same instinct seems to tell us that we can rely on ourselves, and that we understand what is good and what is not. But remember one thing: neither you nor I will be happy before we yield ourselves to His pierced hands and say to Him:

Send me e'en where death defies me, Send me where oppression tries me, Through dark storms upon life's sea! As Thou wilt, beloved Savior, If but Thou wilt show Thy favor, Constantly my staff to be.

So few of us become sanctified and skilled petitioners because we do not continue in the school of prayer. The course is not an easy one, and the difficulties do not consist alone in the temporal and spiritual trials. There is something about this school which tries our patience sorely. Jesus Himself alludes to it on several occasions, especially in Luke 18:1-8, where He [tells His disciples] "that [they] ought always to pray and not to faint" [KJV].

We become faint very easily. How many times have we not earnestly resolved in our own minds to pray for certain people and for certain causes, only to find ourselves growing faint. We were not willing to expend the effort. And little by little we ceased to intercede for others.

The Spirit and Skill

It is the Spirit of prayer who superintends the instruction in the school of prayer. It is not necessary to master a large variety of subjects in order to become skilled in prayer. I would mention briefly only the following:

In the first place, the Spirit must be given an opportunity to reveal Christ to us every day. Christ is such that we need only "see" Him, and prayer will rise from our hearts. Voluntary prayer, confident prayer. We know that Christ can answer prayer. We know also that it gives Him joy to do so. Prayer and intercession have become a delightful and fascinating means of cooperation between Christ and the praying soul.

In the second place, the instruction which the Spirit imparts aims at making us earnestly solicitous. Intercessory prayer is like an ellipse, which rotates about two definite points: Christ and our need. Comfort yourself with the thought that it is the Spirit who is working these things in your heart every day. It is not necessary for you to strive in your own strength to keep your eyes open to Christ and the needs of the world.

No, all you need to do is to listen to the Spirit as He speaks to you every day in the Word and through prayer about Christ and your need, and you will soon notice yourself making progress both in prayer and in intercession.

In the third place, the Spirit teaches us the necessity of self-denial in connection with prayer. There is something about prayer and intercession which calls for more self-denial than any other work to which the Spirit calls us.

The greater part of the work of intercession is, of course, done in secret; and work of this kind requires the expenditure

of greater effort than work which can be seen of men. It is astonishing to see how much it means to us to have others see what we do. It is not only that we all have a great weakness for the praise of others, but the fact that our work is appreciated and valued is a remarkable stimulant to us.

Furthermore, we all love to see results from our labors. But the work of prayer is of such a nature that it is impossible for us always to know definitely whether what happens is a fruit of our own intercession or that of others. Both of these facts call for a great deal of self-denial in connection with prayer.

That is why it is difficult for the Lord to get enough people to carry on this work. It is easy enough to get people to preach. But there are not many who are willing to take upon themselves the selfdenying work connected with prayer, because it is neither seen nor appreciated by men.

On That Great Day

My friend, when you begin to grow tired of the quiet, unnoticed work of praying, then remember that He who "seeth in secret shall reward [thee] openly" [Matt. 6:6, κJV]. He has heard your prayers, and He knows exactly what you have accomplished by means of them, for the salvation of souls. If not before, then on the Great Day, you will come bringing in the sheaves, the fruit of your labors. 🖭

O. HALLESBY (1871-1969) was a professor at Independent Theological Seminary in Oslo, Norway, and was known as one of the foremost preachers, devotional writers, and theological professors of Northern Europe. Excerpted from his book Prayer, and used by permission, Augsburg Publishing House.

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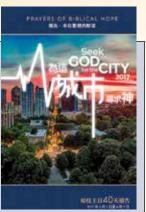


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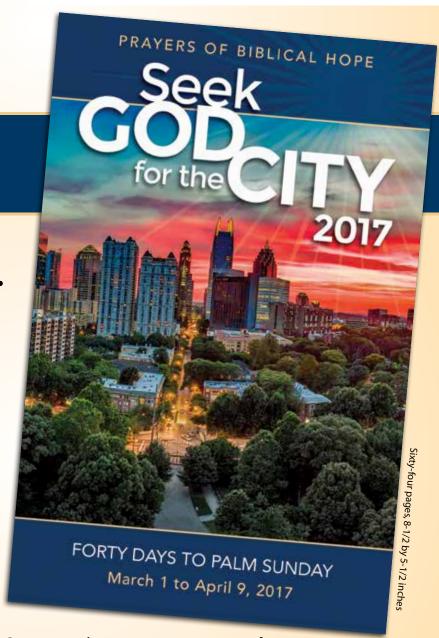
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