

# Watch Unto Prayer



*But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober,  
and watch unto prayer. I Peter 4:7*

**Did you know...** "Prayer Watches" change things...

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- Bangor, Ireland 555 A.D.  
-In a little village in northern Ireland 2,000-3,000 people began praying 24 hours a day with particular emphasis on the night watches. This continued for several hundred years and became a center of revival as the fall of the Roman Empire hit and the Dark Ages took over Europe during the 6th-9th century AD.



- The Island of Rhodes, 1080 A.D.  
A Christian order, the Knights of Saint John Watch established 24 hour prayer to "*Stand against the enemies of the faith, to preserve the unity of the faith, and to defend our lords, the sick and the poor.*(1)" From this fortress 2,000 knights withheld enemy advancement into Europe several times through the centuries with many times their number. The Knights were a tremendous example of watching, standing their ground while God arose and their enemies were scattered.



- Herrnhut, Germany, 1727...  
In the early 1700's, in the tiny village of Herrnhut, Germany, a remarkable move of God was born. In this village, torn apart by denominational differences, the Spirit of the Lord fell and launched a prayer movement that literally changed the course of Christian history. The strife came to a nadir in the spring of 1727. It was then that the earl of Herrnhut, Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, encouraged the townsfolk to meet together to pray and worship. As they worshipped and prayed together, God's presence descended. His Spirit and their hunger inspired them to start praying unceasingly 24 hours a day 7 days a week. As they cooperated with His Spirit, God moved, the churches united, and prayer mobilized for over a hundred

years. The world would never be the same again as countless revivals were sparked in Europe and America through their influence and prayers.



- Swansea, Wales, Welsh Bible College, 1930.  
Rees Howells, founder of the Welsh Bible College, received a burden to intercede for nations and mobilized 24 hour prayer at the Bible College. As World War II broke out, this hidden prayer group interceded for Great Britain and allied forces. Specific strategies were prayed that became reality as seas calmed and air raids were averted leading to allied victory. Leaders of that day including Winston Churchill acknowledged God's divine intervention in protecting Great Britain through this hidden prayer group.

## **It is time for us today...**

Today as we face unprecedented challenges of wars, rumors of war, God is restoring the ministry of the "watchman" to the body of Christ to help defend and protect our cities, state, nation and His purpose. Did you know that when God created man in His image, He had a specific plan in mind. Genesis 2:15 describes God's plan, "God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it." Literally, the term to "tend and to keep" is a translation of the Hebrew word "*shamar*," a word primarily used for watchman in the Scriptures. God's original intent for man was to watch over what He had created, to tend and keep it. Furthermore, the terms watch, watchman, watchmen, watching are mentioned 165 times in the Bible. If you include terms such as see, or observe, the subject is mentioned over 300 times, the same amount as prayer. Yet, unlike prayer, the term "Watch" is not well understood. Tom Hess in his book *The Watchmen*, states "It is my conviction after years of study and experience that all believers are called to be watchmen.(2)"

What we can do alone, is greatly multiplied when it is linked with others. What is a prayer watch and what makes it different from our personal prayer life? Simply stated, a prayer watch harnesses our personal prayers through corporate agreement and creates a culture of prayer. As believers, we are all called to help create a culture of prayer in our church and community. A prayer watch is coming into corporate agreement with God's will about an issue, a situation, or a territorial region in daily persevering prayer.

The scriptural principle of corporate agreement is relayed in Lev 26:7-12, "You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. 'For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new. I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.'"

This culture of prayer is what harnesses the presence of God and brings transformation to our lives, city, state and nation. It is time to connect for the sake of our families, churches, cities, state and nation.

Did you know the following about **prayer watches?**

1. **They promote intimacy with God**
2. **They protect defensively and offensively**
3. **That the night watches are extremely strategic and carry significant spiritual weight.**
4. **Watches help establish government**
5. **Watches pave the way for the future**

See what the Bible has to say...

## **1 PROMOTE INTIMACY WITH GOD**

### **a. Prayer watches operate under the fear of the Lord and intimacy with God.**

- **1 Sam 4:16** *Now when he came, there was Eli, sitting on a seat by the wayside watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told it, all the city cried out.*
- **Psalm 63:3-7** *Because Your loving-kindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.*
- **Psalm 119: 147-152** *I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your word. My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word. Hear my voice according to Your loving-kindness; O Lord, revive me according to Your justice. They draw near who follow after wickedness; They are far from Your law. You are near, O Lord, and all Your commandments are truth. Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever.*
- **Psalm 130:5-6** *I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord More than those who watch for the morning-- Yes, more than those who watch for the morning.*
- **Isaiah 52:8** *Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, With their voices they shall sing together; For they shall see eye to eye When the Lord brings back Zion.*
- **Luke 12:37** *Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.*

## b. God's blessings flow through prayer watches

- **Proverbs 8:34** *Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.*
- **Song of Solomon 3:3-4** *The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, 'Have you seen the one I love?' Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the one I love I held him and would not let him go.*

## 2 PROTECTIVE NATURE OF PRAYER WATCHES

### a. Prayer watches are highly defensive and protective

- **Nehemiah 4:7-9** *Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Amonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion. Nevertheless, we made our prayer to our God and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.*
- **Isaiah 21:6-10** *I stand continually on the watchtower in the daytime; I have sat at my post every night. And look, here comes a chariot of a men with a pair of horsemen! Then he answered and said, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground.'*
- **Ezekiel 33:1-6** *Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: 'When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his sword shall be on his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his sword shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his I will require at the watchman's hand.'*

### b. Prayer watches help offensively in times of spiritual attack to sustain victory

- **Jeremiah 51:12** *Set up the standard on the walls of Babylon; Make the guard strong, Set up the watchmen, Prepare the ambushes. For the Lord has both devised and done What He spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon.*
- **Lamentations 2:19** *"Arise, cry out in the night, At the beginning of the watches; Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward Him For the life of your young children, Who faint from hunger at the head of every street."*
- **Daniel 7:21-22** *I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.*

- **Jeremiah 6:17** *Also, I set watchmen over you saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!'*

### 3 STRATEGIC NATURE OF THE NIGHT WATCH

#### a. The night watches are highly strategic:

- **Genesis 32:24-29** *Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."*
- **Exodus 14:24** *Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the Lord looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians.*
- **Judges 7:19-24** *So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers--they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing--and they cried, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled.*
- **1 Samuel 11:11** *So it was, on the next day, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and killed Ammonites until the heat of the day. And it happened that those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.*
- **Matthew 14:24-25** *Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.*

### 4 ESTABLISH GOVERNMENT

#### a. Watches help establish righteousness and governmental order.

- **Psalms 127:1** *Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.*

- **Jeremiah 7:2** *"The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 'Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord!' Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.'"*
- **Daniel 4:17** *'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'*
- **Acts 9:10-18** *Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias," And he said, "Here I am, Lord." So the Lord said to him, "arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for One called Saul of Tarsus, for behold he is praying.... And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."*

## b. Prayer watches help build the church and the Kingdom of God

- **2 Kings 11:6** *One-third shall be at the gate of Sur, and one-third at the gate behind the escorts. You shall keep the watch of the house, lest it be broken down.*
- **Psalms 127:1** *Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.*
- **Isaiah 62:6-7** *I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*

# 5 PAVE THE WAY FOR THE FUTURE

## a. Watches prepare us for the future

- **Habakkuk 1:5** *"Look among the nations and watch – Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you.*
- **Mark 13:32-37** *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, in the evening at midnight, a the crowing of the rooster or in the morning, I say "Watch"*
- **Revelation 16:15** *"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk and they see his shame."*

# THE "HOW TO'S" OF A CORPORATE PRAYER WATCH

*I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem;  
They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord,  
do not keep silent, and give Him no rest  
till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Isa. 62:6-7*

## I. PURPOSE OF A PRAYER WATCH

### 1. Provide ongoing prayer coverage for cities and regions in preparation for revival.

*For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns." Isa. 62:1*

### 2. Promote unity and networking between churches in the community through prayer and relationships.

*Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.' Mt. 22:37-40*

### 3. Develop strategic level prayer initiatives for the region in cooperation with state and national leadership.

*You also son of man take a clay tablet and lay it before you and portray on it a city, Jerusalem. Lay siege against it, build a siege wall against it, and heap up a mound against it; set camps against it also, and place battering rams against it all around. Ezek. 4:1-2*

### 4. Help raise the spiritual climate over the region by meeting regularly in focused strategic prayer.

*The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16*

## II. IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES TO FOLLOW IN DEVELOPING A HEALTHY CITY /REGIONAL PRAYER WATCH

### 1. Commit to a block of time each week to pray for the region. (James 4:8, 5:16)

This is most easily done by each person having their own personal time with the Lord during the week so that they can contribute more strategically.

### 2. Apply the following rules for corporate prayer

- Come ready and willing to participate by laying aside personal concerns and agendas.
- Release grace to all involved in the corporate prayer watch.
- Expect God to move.

### **3. Always start a corporate watch by praying a blessing**

- This is easily done by having participants pray a blessing for each other. Personal ministry can occur during this time.
- Imparting a blessing is an important act of worship where people come under the canopy of the Kingdom of God.

### **4. Use testimony time to encourage faith and sharing of answered prayers**

This is an important act of worship and Thanksgiving.

### **5. Persevere in keeping an atmosphere of grace and thanksgiving in the corporate setting so that warfare can be effectual and a critical spirit is kept from developing.**

*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Heb 4:16*

### **6. Keep the corporate watch focused on the Lord through worship and intercession.**

- Be sure to stay with what the Holy Spirit is saying. Do not venture into areas where there is not corporate agreement.
- *When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. John 6:13*
- Use Scriptures in prayer.

## **III. KEEP STRATEGIES SIMPLE SO THAT PRAYER CAN BE SUSTAINED FOR THE LONG HAUL.**

- Small groups can gain much advance by praying the 4th watch (3am-6am). For example, seven people can cover an entire week if each person took a different night each week to pray.
- Commit to corporate gatherings on a consistent basis so that sustained Kingdom advance can be made in the spiritual climate over your city/region. We recommend weekly gatherings.
- Encourage periodic corporate "soaking" times of extended worship and intercession, i.e. 12, 24, 48 hours.

## **IV. REMEMBER YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO PERSEVERE IN PRAYER FOR GOD'S DESTINY (*TRANSFORMATION*) OF YOUR CITY / REGION AND REVIVAL !!!**

# SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 4TH WATCH

## *Are you frequently being wakened at 3 am?*

There is strategic significance in praying during the early morning hours. Prayers during these early morning hours are highly effectual in harnessing God's transforming power. The fourth watch is defined by the Roman watch as a time spanning from 3am-6am. Biblically, strategic events take place particularly during the night and early morning hours/watches.

- Jacob wrestled with God and met Him face to face just before entering into his destiny as Israel. Gen 32:22-31
- Moses led the Israelites across the Red Sea Ex 14:25-26
- Gideon defeated the Midianites, Judges 7:19-24
- Peter and Jesus walk on water, Mt 14:25-26
- Jesus is resurrected from the dead, Mt 28:1
- The bridegroom woos His bride in the night hours, Song of Solomon

The Hebrew watch was divided into three watches, the first, middle and morning watch. As the Roman influence and supremacy was established, the number of watches increased to four and were described in numerical order 1st (6pm-9pm); 2nd (9pm-12MN); 3rd (12MN-3am); 4th (3am-6am).

During the 4th watch there are significant power encounters that make way for the Kingdom of God to penetrate the earth. Such prayers are highly protective and carry transforming power particularly when linked with other watchmen. The importance to apprehend the purposes of God in prayer during these hours is highly strategic and powerful. Thus, much advance can be made even with a few people in agreement. Corporate and cooperative prayer during the fourth watch is therefore highly effectual in harnessing God's transforming power for our lives, city, state, and nation.

Furthermore, Jesus' Parable of the Sower and the seed represents a reflection of Kingdom dynamics. After all, it is Jesus who said *The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.* Matthew 13:24-25. If this is a season of Kingdom advance, perhaps "fasting" sleep will not only be powerful but help break spiritual slumber off the church so that it can advance into revival. The 4th watch is a powerful time of both personal and corporate breakthrough into His presence. God is looking for Samuel's today who will respond to Him when the 3am wake-up call comes by saying, *"What is it Lord, here am I."* This is not just an idea but a real provoking of the Holy Spirit Himself upon God's people in these days of conflict to bring spiritual breakthrough and Kingdom advance.

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