

# A Biblical Mandate for 24/7 Prayer

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## **1 Scriptural base for night-and-day prayer**

The concept of night-and-day prayer is rooted in several Scriptures and Biblical principles:

1. God watches over us 24 hours a day (Ps.121) and in His Word He calls us up to watch and pray with Him. Revelations 4-5 states that the angels and the 24 elders worship God literally night-and-day. The Bible teaches us to pray that God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven and in heaven there is only praise, worship and intercession, 24 hours a day. This is why we believe that praise worship and intercession should also take place on earth for 24 hours a day. The only way in which this can be realized, is by establishing 24-hour prayer watches.
2. In the Old Testament, the fire on the altar was kept burning: "And the fire upon the altar shall be kept burning on it: it shall not be allowed to go out. The priest shall burn wood on it every morning and lay the burnt offering in order upon it and he shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. The fire shall be burning continually upon the altar; it shall not go out" (Lev.6: 12-13). The priest’s two most important tasks were: a) intercession (through prayers and offerings); and b) praise and worship. The fire on the altar was a symbol of the continued praise, worship, intercession and reconciliation done by the priests.
3. God Himself appoints us as watchmen on the walls to pray for the fulfillment of His promises: “I have set watchmen upon your walls, O Jerusalem, who will never hold their peace day or night; You who are His servants and by your prayers put the Lord in remembrance of His promises, keep not silence, and give Him no rest until He establishes Jerusalem and makes her a praise in the earth (Isa.62:6-7). Note: a) it is God Himself who appoints the watchmen; b) they must stand before Him 24 hours a day; and c) the watchmen may not keep silent or allow Him to rest until all His promises have

been fulfilled. God's Word holds thousands of promises for His children and Scripture instructs us to continually pray for the fulfillment of these promises.

4. In Luke 18:7 God promises that He will do right by us (set right what is wrong – crime, violence, poverty, drug abuse, corruption, immorality, injustice, broken marriages and the AIDS epidemic) if we call to Him night-and-day. "Shall God not do justice to His chosen people who call to Him night-and-day? How long shall He let them wait?" (Luk18:8)
5. Paul's letters speak often of night-and-day intercession for the church and for the advancement of the gospel.
6. To serve God the Father night-and-day through praise and worship, to grow in intimacy with God and to live in His countenance. Rev.4:8-11: "And the four living creatures, individually having six wings, were full of eyes all over and within [underneath their wings]; and night-and-day they never stop saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty (omnipotent), Who was and Who is and Who is to come. And whenever the living creatures offer glory and honour and thanksgiving to Him who sits on the throne, Who lives forever and ever. The twenty-four elders fall prostrate before Him Who is sitting on the throne, and they worship Him Who lives forever and ever; and they throw down their crowns before the throne crying out, Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honour and dominion, for You created all things; by Your will they were created."
7. Praying for this generation of young people to return to God and to become God-fearing men and women who will carry out the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. Lam.2:18-19: "The hearts called to the Lord. Then I, Jeremiah, cried, O wall of the Daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river night-and-day; give yourself no rest; let not your eyes stop shedding tears. Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the night watches; pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift up your hands toward Him for the lives of your young children, who faint from hunger at the head of every street."

## **2 *Benefits of night-and-day prayer***

1. A 24-7 prayer watch will be one way a church can fulfil God's command to be a house of prayer for the nations (Isa.56:7). By implementing 24-7 prayer watches, churches are able to take responsibility and stand as watchmen on the walls for the church worldwide, for their own communities, their country and for other nations.
2. 24-Hours of praise, worship and intercession bring about a new and deeper dimension with regard to an intercessor's relationship with God.
3. A 24-hour prayer watch focuses on bringing in the harvest.
4. Through prayer watches we can pray night-and-day for our own needs and the needs of the community.

5. Night-and-day prayer helps us to persevere in prayer, to continue in prayer and to pray continually as the Word commands us to do.
6. A 24-hour prayer watch promotes unity among believers because they focus on the same issues and pray together for them. It also binds churches and denominations together.
7. It helps every intercessor and prayer group to understand that they have a responsibility and it strengthens them to know that they are not praying alone, which is for most people a huge encouragement.
8. History shows that night-and-day prayer had a huge impact on communities and on the world.

### **3 *Prayer and action***

Prayer is not an end in itself. Prayer brings us into fellowship with God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. When we start to fellowship with Jesus, He will reveal His heart to us and take us to people in need. The purpose of prayer is to strengthen us to live the Great Commandment (to love...) and the Great Commission (to go...). We do not pray for the sake of praying. Real prayer will always lead to action: touching people's lives with the love and compassion of Christ.

1. Prayer must always lead to a missional life style - taking the love and salvation of Jesus to people in need of salvation, comfort and healing.
2. Building on the foundation of prayer, we must live as disciples of Jesus, following Him wherever He goes, irrespective of the cost.
3. Prayer must lead to a life of compassion towards all who are in need.
4. Prayer forms the basis for Christians to live in peace, reconciliation and in love with one another.
5. Prayer brings us into a life of intimacy with Jesus.
6. Through prayer we receive power from God (through the Holy Spirit) to be witnesses of the love, salvation and compassion of Jesus and to take it to the ends of the earth.

Some people pray just to pray and some people pray to know God  
– Andrew Murray

### **4 *A short study on the use of the word "watch" in Scripture***

In Gen.2:15 God appointed mankind as His representative, people as watchmen, guardians of the Garden of Eden. The Hebrew word for "watch" is shamar, one of the three words used for watchman in the Old Testament. Adam was told to look after the garden and to maintain it. The other two words are natsar and tsaphah. All three these Hebrew words imply protection and defense, as well as aggression and offensive action. We can, therefore, say that these words actually mean to guard or to protect by keeping watch, to preserve or to hide.

The two Greek words for “to guard” are gregoreuo and agrupneo. Both imply protection, but literally mean, “to be awake or sleepless”. The words refer to a sentinel, a scout, a night watchman – one whose task it is to stay awake, to be on the outlook for signs of danger.

In Old Testament times, a watchman was responsible for a) looking after crops; and b) keeping watch for enemies on the walls of the city. During harvest time (also in the spiritual sense), the services of watchmen are essential. All over the world it is now harvest time, that is why we currently need watchmen – to watch over God’s harvest (Joh.17:12) and to protect it. Watchmen were, however, also placed on the walls of cities to protect its people and to safeguard it. (Isa.1:6-8; Isa.62:6; Ezek.22:30)

*And the four living creatures...night-and-day they never stop saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty (omnipotent), Who was and Who is and Who is to come...*

(Rev.4:8-11)

Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.

– John Bunyan