

Line Upon Line, Precept Upon Precept



BONNIE AND I hope that by this point you are passionately ready to begin or participate in a Watch of the Lord. That's why we want to share the guidelines the Lord has taught us as we have kept watch with Him each Friday night since January 1995. We encourage you to consider these guidelines prayerfully in order to be blessed with a fuller release of the Holy Spirit during any sort of watch night service you may implement.

But more importantly, we encourage you to seek the Lord's counsel as to how and when to apply any of these ideas, since the Lord, as Captain of the Host of Heaven, is the one who is ultimately in charge of our watch activities.

While these are not hard-and-fast rules that must be kept or else, they are principles that work, and we believe they will help you. The model for the watch that the Lord has given us is very palatable, even to Westerners. It can flow in every culture, yet it gives each group the liberty to develop its own identity.

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Every watch is different, and every date with Jesus is distinct. The watch in Richmond, Virginia, is not going to be the same as our watch in Charlotte. The watch in Belize may have a certain nature to it that fits like a glove with the living vessels there. The one in Switzerland will probably be very different. We pass on to you these general guidelines, but the watch is living and individual. The Holy Spirit works with the individual persons involved.

In that way God fulfills His whole purpose in the big picture of the watch. Each watch becomes a thread in the great tapestry God is weaving. Each prayer is added to the golden bowls of incense, which are offered on the golden altar before the throne of God (Rev. 8:3–5).

The Lord is the Captain of every watch. Always, we take our direction from Him. We encourage you not to stick with a form all the time, because the Lord will come and the stream will change; so flow with the Lord. But we do suggest that you always love the Lord first—start with praise and worship. “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise” (Ps. 100:4). That’s how we are to approach Him.

The useful tips outlined in this chapter will help you facilitate the move of the Holy Spirit during your own Watch of the Lord.

1. Designate a watch leader.

The Holy Spirit always honors the appropriate order as established by church leadership. We have learned to designate a watch leader—someone whose task it is to be in charge. This leader is called the watch captain, and choosing the right person is essential for the long-term success of the watch. This is a position of God-given authority, being selected to lead intercession in the army of God. Even if yours is a small group, please allow yourself to be directed by the Lord when choosing a specific leader who will be responsible for protecting the anointing through loving leadership throughout the Watch of the Lord.

The captain you select may not necessarily be a “born leader,” but instead someone who knows what it means to be continually

“soaking” in the anointed presence of the Holy Spirit. This person should be a man or woman of prayer, someone who understands what it means to get into the presence of God on a regular basis and who can lead others there too via the anointing of intercessory prayer.

If your watch is in a local church, you may wish to designate as watch captain the senior pastor or an anointed servant selected by the pastor to perform this function. The captain must be one who is trained to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and keep the flow of the Watch of the Lord in the same vein. The watch captain must deter any attempts to divert attention away from the flow of the Holy Spirit, whether intentional or unintentional.

Alternate leaders should be chosen to fill in during times when the captain must be absent. This will guard against potential burnout. Although the watch captain may choose to share fresh prophetic scripture and thoughts pertinent to the watch, his or her primary function is to direct the watch—not necessarily preach or teach. Teaching or preaching should be kept to a minimum since the watch is set apart as a time to be with God and pray.

2. Appoint a watch communications officer.

The Bible was written down mainly by scribes—those who heard what God was saying to His people via the Holy Spirit and who diligently wrote it down. So we suggest that you also faithfully record the prophetic revelation poured out to you each week from heaven by appointing a watch communications officer, who is responsible for seeing there is a written record of the events and revelations that occur as you and your group gather to pray. The communications officer may also serve as an actual scribe—the person doing the writing.

It is a good idea to appoint one watch communications officer as well as three alternate scribes. The communications officer oversees the scribes and is ultimately responsible for the logs. For larger watches, the communications officer might have two or three alternates to take over during different parts of the watch, one at a time.

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Commission each to record only the most pertinent events—the highlights—of the Watch of the Lord.

Ezekiel, Isaiah and Habakkuk were all such watchmen—scribes. Hearing from God and then writing down what He speaks is displayed throughout Scripture. The prophet Habakkuk wrote, “I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me. . . . Then the LORD answered me and said: ‘Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it’” (Hab. 2:1–2).

Ezekiel wrote, “I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me” (Ezek. 33:7). Later still, the apostle Paul wrote, “Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thess. 5:20–21).

When appropriate, during the watch share from the watch log of the previous week to show the pattern of prayer the Lord was directing then. After the scribe records the events of the watch, we request that he or she communicate to our office the most pertinent things expressed by the Holy Spirit so we can keep these revelations on file. We read each watch log in order to acquire the collective feeling of what the Holy Spirit is saying.

We also communicate with other watch groups to compare what the Holy Spirit is saying to the body of Christ via the many watch groups that are now located virtually around the globe—with more being added weekly! Through this networking we are able to strengthen and encourage one another as we confirm the word of the Lord to His church.

Here are some important things your watch communications officer, or scribe, should always remember:

- Come prepared with a notebook or laptop computer designated as a watch journal and something with which to write; inside it keep an accurate account of the events of each Watch of the Lord. A small tape recorder may also be helpful to record words from God or prophecies.
- Record all pertinent scripture verses shared, any new prophecies

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given, urgent prayer requests, prophetic songs, testimonies directly related to prayers answered from a previous watch and any prophetic prayers.

- If the scribe must be absent, the communications officer should assign an alternate scribe or arrange to have the service taped and notes taken afterward.
- We encourage those who are starting corporate watches to drop us a line or contact us by e-mail or fax so that we may pray for you. Give us your name, the watch captain's name, your church, your city and your country. If the Lord gives you a prophetic impression or you have a special testimony that you want to share about the watch, please drop us a line. We would appreciate hearing what the Holy Spirit is saying to the watch groups He is raising up around the globe.

3. Establish a Watch of the Lord protocol.

The watch captain can prevent most distractions by setting standards, or protocol to be observed during each and every watch. These should be recapped early in the evening each week so that newcomers will know what to expect. For instance:

- Children are welcome to participate in the watch. They can sing, dance, join in praise and worship, sleep or play quietly. The strength of the watch from the beginning has been that everyone can experience it, even people who have small children or babies. If families participating in the watch bring children and babies, the parents must be responsible for their children's behavior during the watch hours. It may work for your group to have the older children watch after the younger ones. Some welcome ways for them to pass the time might be quiet games or coloring books. Children should be instructed not to move around, run through the building or play in a loud and boisterous manner. We must, as a group, learn to keep

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our focus always on the Lord. Children should never be outside the room where the watch is being held unless supervised by a parent. This is for their safety.

- Water, coffee and creamer are available throughout the night, but snacks are not suggested since the watch is set aside as a time of prayer and fasting. (See Joel 1:13–14.)
- The watch hours should be regular and established. Friday night seems to be the time that the Lord has anointed for us as the Watch of the Lord. This is also a practical time, since many people do not have to work on Saturdays and can take time that day to catch up on their sleep and recuperate from the rigors of all-night prayer. Those who attend should feel free to come and go quietly as necessary, but there should be no loitering outside the building or around the coffee pot. When necessary, appoint ushers to supervise the building.
- Those who become tired may feel free to “snooze in the anointing.”
- Those who receive prophetic words, visions and scripture verses should write these down throughout the night and give them to the scribe or watch captain. Later in the night the watch captain may share some of these prophetic words and revelations, although this should be kept to a limit so as not to sidetrack the group. The watch captain should also screen prophetic words before reading them out loud.
- Although our primary focus is to minister to the Lord, a designated ministry team should be available to pray for people. The laying on of hands will be done by those appointed by the watch captain. Those who have a personal prophetic word for someone are requested to hold it until ministry time, and then wait for an OK from the watch captain before giving it.

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- At some point during the evening, taking corporate communion is suggested. Bonnie and I believe in the power of sharing the body and the blood of the Lord's table in order to cleanse, build and unify. Intercession will usually flow much more powerfully during the last hours, once we have shared communion together.

4. Designate worship leaders.

Worship should be a major ingredient of your successful “watch recipe.” If at all possible, Bonnie and I suggest that you designate more than one worship leader—or perhaps a worship leader and an alternate who can play guitar or piano as well as lead others in singing. One or more alternate leaders may help to take the pressure off the worship leader, but the hand-off should take place at a time that will not interrupt noticeably the flow of worship. Singers and other instrumentalists may be added as the Lord brings anointed worshipers into your midst.

Those who do not have a worship leader in their midst who is also an instrumentalist may wish to use praise and worship tapes. The song choices should include lively praise songs at first that build faith, then songs that lead to intimate worship. Afterward, you may want to step up the tempo again with more lively songs. Remember—the worship leader should help the congregation build their spiritual muscles.

You may also wish to purchase simple percussion instruments, such as maracas, tambourines, triangles, wooden sticks and bongos so the watchmen can participate.

Do not discount the importance of the prophetic dance. You may wish to designate an open area for the purpose of such dancing. The Lord often anoints His worshipers to dance before Him as David danced. As the Spirit moves in your midst, you may even see the anointing to dance prophetically come upon the children.

5. Intercession in the Watch of the Lord

Bonnie and I have noted that it is usually not until the later hours

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of the watch that the spirit of intercession will fall. It seems to be only after we have spent considerable time before the Lord, loving Him in worship, that prayer reaches its maximum intensity. However, the spirit of prayer may fall suddenly during worship or even at the beginning of the watch.

While we want to stay sensitive to the move of the Holy Spirit and avoid trying to come up with our various “formulas,” Bonnie and I have identified the following areas of intercession that we attempt to cover at every watch:

- Pray for the church of Jesus Christ locally, nationally and around the world. Maps of your city, state, nation and nations of the world—Israel in particular—are helpful in making points of contact during such intercession.
- Pray for all the world’s watchmen and intercessors, asking the Lord to raise up more workers in His global harvest field.
- Pray for local government leaders, the governor of your state, the members of Congress and the Supreme Court, as well as the president. “I exhort you first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence” (1 Tim. 2:1–2).
- Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
- Pray for national concerns, international tranquility and economic stability to facilitate the End-Time harvest.
- Pray specifically for ministry leaders and area pastors with whom there is a commitment for consistent intercession.
- Pray for the households and children of the watchmen, both

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present and absent. In our watch, every young person is prayed over each time we meet, prayed for by name and covered. The teenagers love that anointing. They come as a whole group and get in line to be prayed for all the time.

- Pray for the elderly, the lonely, the forgotten and those in prison.
- Pray for the requests of individuals that have been submitted to the group during the week. These requests should be kept brief in nature and can even be offered up collectively before the Lord, unless the watch captain is impressed to pray at length and more specifically over a certain need. Prayer for these requests is usually best in the last hour of the watch.
- Ask the captain of the watch or the designated ministry team to pray for and minister any prophetic words to those individuals who desire personal prayer during the watch.

We have seen awesome results to prayer during these all-night watch meetings. We have learned always to be ready to make fresh prophetic intercession according to the Holy Spirit's instruction from watch to watch.

6. Corporate communion and giving

There is great blessing in sharing the Lord's Table with those present at each Watch of the Lord. As Bonnie and I mentioned earlier, often we have received fresh impartation and an increase of the anointing as we have taken communion in the course of the watch. At times the Lord's presence has manifested in our midst, bringing outbursts of joyous laughter.

In addition to serving communion at our watches in Charlotte, we also take up an offering for the poor and homeless in our area. As the Lord increases your blessings and adds to the number of people who pray and watch with you weekly, we sincerely hope that you will

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find a project in your area to support, such as the poor or those in prison. The support of the underprivileged is an ongoing need in our midst, and ministering to those less fortunate will bring a reward as well as bring honor to the Lord.

Remember, then, that the Watch of the Lord can be held by anyone who carries a burden to pray. A church may start such a group, or even a single individual. All it takes is a commitment and a heart to pray.

We are praying for you as you begin your Watch of the Lord. You are a vital part of God's army. If you are starting a corporate watch, contact us with your e-mail address or your regular address so we can keep in touch with you. We pray for all the watch captains in the world. When we hold conferences, we always hold a watch. Perhaps you can come for training and experience a corporate watch.

Remember, when God's people pray, awesome things happen.