

5 Ways to Develop a Watchman's Eye in Prophetic Intercession

Prophetic intercession is near and dear to my heart. I love the way God nudges me to pray about something so that He can intervene. I have seen so many amazing answers to prophetic prayer! Such prayers strike the mark much more often than those I invent out of my own limited heart and mind.

Here is how I usually describe prophetic intercession: Prophetic intercession is waiting before God in order to hear or receive His burden (a word, a concern, a warning, a condition, a vision or a promise), and responding back to Him with prayerful petition, sometimes with corresponding actions.

In the Old Testament, the priests pleaded the needs of the people before the Lord while the prophets pleaded the interests of God before the people. The two roles are combined in what we call “prophetic intercession”—a watchman-intercessor prays back to God an inspiration regarding a human concern that comes from God’s own heart.

Jeremiah 27:18 says, “But if they are prophets, and if the word of the Lord is with them, let them now make intercession to the Lord of Hosts.”

Abraham, Anna and Daniel were all prophetic intercessors. Themselves prophets, they tapped into God’s very heart when they apprehended His promises, which God expressed directly to them or showed them in the words of other prophets. Recognizing that they had a role to play in bringing those divine promises into being, they began to watch and pray. The verse quoted above gives a glimpse into what I am trying to describe.

Prophetic intercession paves the way for the fulfillment of prophetic promises.

Power Up the Prophetic Promises

God has made and continues to make promises. I believe that every promise finds its fulfillment only when the Holy Spirit pleads it before the heavenly throne through one of God's chosen intercessors. The promises may be historical covenant promises that God has made to His people, truths that have been preached, "prayer burdens" or spontaneous, Spirit-inspired utterances. What makes them prophetic is that they reveal something that was hidden in the heart of God until it was expressed.

On behalf of someone else, the intercessor takes up a case of justice before a sovereign and entirely righteous God. God is looking for the man or woman who will take up the plea, and He can hardly believe it when no one volunteers to stand in the gap.

Prayer Insights from God's Heart

Prophetic intercession can also mean the senses or urgings that come from the Holy Spirit that regard people or circumstances about which the intercessor knows little or nothing. God taps the watchman on the shoulder and imparts a compelling awareness that it is time to pray for a very particular need: "Here ... Pray for this thing right now!" He supplies just enough information to allow the intercessor to pray effectively about a matter, large or small, in a divinely anointed manner.

Often we call this "receiving a prayer burden," and it can mean much more than having a vague (easy-to-ignore) sense of a need. If we cultivate our ability to hear the Holy Spirit, we can receive circumstantial details, specific wording for our prayers, a sense of timing and a gift of faith.

When Daniel took time to reread the prophetic words of Jeremiah, suddenly he was convinced that they applied to the immediate future (see Dan. 9:2). The words he read were as follows: "For thus says the Lord: When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jer. 29:10).

Daniel immediately began to pray for the fulfillment of the promise that the prophet had delivered to the previous generation. His own prophetic senses alerted him to the imminent need expressed by the earlier prophetic promise.

Must we pray at length as Daniel did, with extreme fasting and weakness? Not unless that is what is called for. For the most part, we can cultivate our spiritual hearing in simple, practical ways.

First, we stand at our appointed posts as watchmen, ready for anything. We get away from external distractions, as Jesus did when he withdrew before dawn to isolated locations (see Mark 1:35). Quieting our internal noise, we watch to see what God may want to say: "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10). When we hear something, we do something—write it down, pray from it, sound an alarm—whatever is appropriate. That is what the prophet Habakkuk did:

"I will stand at my watch and station myself on the watchtower; and I will keep watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me: 'Write the vision, and make it plain on tablets, that he who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it delays, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.'" (Hab. 2:1-3)

You may find, as I do, that it is also easier to hear God's voice when you are performing automatic, mindless tasks such

as driving the car, showering, exercising, washing the dishes or cleaning the house, especially if you are quietly praising God at the same time. He is more eager to speak to you than you are to hear from Him.

Praying with Watchman's Eyes in Our Generation

My friend Cindy Jacobs travels the world ministering as a prophetess and a prophetic intercessor. Early on, the Lord called her with this word from the Bible: "Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession" (Ps. 2:8). She has endeavored to live it out. She is an absolute Globe Trotter and has probably ministered to more governmental leaders than any person I know.

She and her husband Mike co-founded a ministry called Generals International, which provides a platform from which they can launch prayer journeys, practical biblical teaching, and more. She has written many books, including *Hearing the Voice of God* and *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy*, from which I want to share an excerpt about how you can develop what she calls a "watchman's eye":

Here are several things you can do to develop a watchman's eye:

- 1. Sign up for the army! Tell the Lord that you are willing to be a watchman.*
- 2. Keep your heart pure so that you can properly discern areas for which God wants you to pray.*
- 3. Develop a God-consciousness in your life. Be aware at every moment that you are on call. Being a watchman is very much like being a doctor who carries a beeper. At any given moment he or she may be called up for an emergency. No matter what you are doing, God may call you to change your plans, pray and sound the alarm to stop the enemy's attack.*

4. *Pray that God will teach you the proper time and place to sound the alarm. God reveals to intercessors the intimate needs of those for whom we intercede. This is a precious trust. The things God shares with us are not to be told to others. Many prayer groups are nothing more than spiritual gossip sessions ...*
5. *Do not be afraid to pray prayers that may seem unusual to you! You may be praying, for instance, and all of a sudden you start praying for a pastor in South America whom you do not even know. Many watchmen have averted disasters that threaten people they have never met.*

There is great diversity in the body of Christ, in the pastoral, evangelistic and prophetic ministries, and in the global prayer movement also. I for one want to pray with the eyes of a watchman! This prayer grace is not for an elite few—it is offered to those who hunger to take their place on the walls of intercession in their generation. You too can be empowered by the Holy Spirit to pray with watchman's eyes.

Prayer

Lord, with You on my side, I can face any enemy. I trust You completely with my life because you are the highest, strongest, wisest and most trustworthy—and you love me in spite of my weaknesses. I am eternally grateful to enjoy right standing with You, completely free from condemnation or accusation. Because You sent Your own Son to earth, I can come into Your presence. He now sits at Your right hand where He always has Your ear, and I can come close, too. You have enlarged my heart so that I can intercede before you on behalf of others. I now ask You for insights and grace so I too can pray effectively with watchman's eyes. Yours forever, in Jesus, Amen.