

James Goll: You Are Chosen as a Spiritual Watchman

God's Calendar Contains Divine Appointments

I have a calendar on which I write down my many diverse appointments. Because I am a widower, at the beginning of every New Year, the first dates that go on my calendar are the birthdays of my four adult kids. But the four quickly became eight, as they all got married within a three-year time frame. So now I have eight appointments. Oh, mercy, those eight have now quickly become 14 and counting, with grandchildren being added.

My calendar is full of these 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, declaring that I am a chosen watchman. I show up expectant, ever-ready and prepared to pray.

In my annual planning, I set apart 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 of Prayer 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 on your calendar. We get an indication of the importance of our assignments in this exhortation from Isaiah 62:6-7: "I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night. You who remind the Lord, do not keep silent; give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a glory in 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, "whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23b).

So I continue to seek the Lord and ask to learn His will and His ways. 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 subject. In fact, Jesus taught His disciples to "Watch and pray" (Matt. 26:41a).

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: "Continue in prayer, and be watchful with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2). One key in this 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 is sure to keep you going.

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!

I learned that if I do what God wants me to do (watch and pray), 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 make intercession (see 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, Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak, and the very similar Mark 14:38, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The

spirit indeed 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 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)
- **Psalms 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
- **Psalms 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 crisis-intervention 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, that He will send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:38). 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.”

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 in their diverse watches.

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 directed by Dick Eastman and many other ministries.

Then add the diversity of ministries such as The Call with Lou Engle, Reformation Prayer Network with Cindy Jacobs, Heartland Apostolic Prayer Network with John Benefield, the International House of Prayer – Kansas City with pioneer Mike Bickle and our very own Prayer Storm with Jon and Jolene Hamill, where every prayer matters. In the Nashville, Tennessee area, we have a regional prayer network called Worship City Prayer. In addition to the few I have mentioned, there are also hundreds and possibly thousands of local churches in the nation with prayer calls and prayer rallies.

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.” If this is true, then the growing numbers of watchmen on the walls today are leading us to 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. 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! {eoa}