

# Keeping

# WATCH



## Spiritual Watchmen

In Scripture, there is a term used to describe guards who were responsible for protecting towns and military installations from attacks and other potential dangers. That term is **watchmen**.

Not to be confused with designers or manufacturers of timepieces, these watchmen were often stationed on high walls or in watchtowers, reconnoitring for approaching friends as well as enemies.

An example of this can be found in 2 Kings 9:17, when a watchman standing on the tower in Jezreel spied the company of Jehu arriving and informed Joram about it.

### What else did watchmen guard or do?

1 Samuel 19:11 reveals that Saul sent men to David's house to keep watch over him, with the intention of killing him in the morning.

In Isaiah 5:1-2 and Matthew 21:33, we read that watchmen safeguarded fields and vineyards during harvest time.

Separately, Psalm 130:6 informs us that watchmen also acted as sentinels who announced the start of a new day.

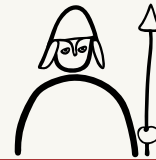
Scripture also mentions spiritual watchmen, in the form of prophets like Ezekiel and Hosea. Their task as watchmen was to exhort God's people to be faithful, and at times, warn them of the perils of doing evil.

The prophets certainly had a heavy responsibility. Disobedience on their part meant that the people would be vulnerable to danger and suffering, and that their own lives would be at stake. Ezekiel 33:9 gives us an indication of this: "But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life."

The role of spiritual watchmen is also illustrated in the New Testament in the form of church leaders: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account. Let them do this with joy..." (Hebrews 13:17).



# How can we be



# spiritual watchmen?

## 1. Stay Vigilant

We are to be ever ready for the Lord's return. As it says in Luke 12:35-40, "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves."

But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

Let us also be attentive to how the Holy Spirit is prompting us in our everyday lives.

## 2. Be Faithful in Prayer

We are to be resolute in prayer, so that we may stave off temptation. As Mark 14:38-40 says, "Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Jesus said those very words while at the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples, after He found them sleeping and not keeping watch.

Let us be committed in our prayer routines especially in challenging seasons so as to keep Jesus at the centre of our lives.

## 3. Be Aware of Enemy Tactics

We are to be aware and alert to the ways the evil one tries to draw us away from God. Matthew 10:16 offers us this caution: "See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

Helpful practices in this regard include doing regular examinations of conscience and reflecting carefully on the occasions we sin.

Getting to know God's ways through His Word can also help us to sift out what is of God, and what is not.

## 4. Point Others to Jesus

As the prophets did, let us also point others to Jesus, our Way, Truth and Life. We will do well to encourage one another to remain faithful using God's Word too. As it says in Romans 15:4, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope."

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