

Watch and Pray

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By Dave Butts

When focusing on the Second Coming of Jesus, most Christians seem to want to talk of nothing but speculation concerning future events:

- * Will the Temple be rebuilt...where?
- * Will the rapture happen before, in the midst of, or after the tribulation?
- * Will there be a great tribulation?
- * Which world leader is the anti-Christ?

After examining Scripture, you will find that the focus is not on trying to figure out the details in advance, but rather on the response of the Christian to the imminent return of Christ. Look how Jesus commands us to respond to indications of the nearness of His return:

Matthew 24:

“Watch out that no one deceives you” (verse 4)

“See to it that you are not alarmed” (verse 6)

“Stand firm to the end” (verse 13)

“Keep watch” (verse 42)

Mark 13:

“Watch out that no one deceives you” (verse 5)

“Do not be alarmed” (verse 7)

“Be on your guard” (verse 9)

“Do not worry” (verse 11)

“Stand firm” (verse 13)

“Be on your guard” (verse 23)

“Be on your guard. Be alert” (verse 33)

“Keep watch” (verse 35)

“Watch” (verse 37)

Luke 21:

“Watch out that you are not deceived” (verse 8)

“Do not be frightened” (verse 9)

“Stand firm” (verse 19)

“Stand up and lift up your heads” (verse 28)

“Be careful” (verse 34)

“Be always on the watch and pray” (verse 36)

This last verse, Luke 21:36, I believe sums up the biblical response of the Christian to the return of the Lord... **“Be always on the watch and pray.”** God today appears to be restoring the “Watch of the Lord.” Christians around the world are beginning to take seriously the command to watch and pray. There are even places where prayer is lifted up continuously.

Jim Goll in his excellent book, *The Lost Art of Intercession*, describes the job of a watchman:

“The Greek word of ‘watch’ in these verses is *gregoreuo*, and it means ‘to be vigilant, wake, to be watchful.’ A watchman on the wall does many things. He carefully watches what is happening and alerts the community when good ambassadors approach the city. The guardsman then will open the gates and lower the bridge so the ambassadors may enter. A watchman also warns the city far in advance when an enemy approaches. He sounds an alarm to awaken the people because he knows ‘to forewarn them is to alert and arm them.’ Then they quickly can rally to take their stand on the wall against the enemy before he wrongfully tries to enter the city.” (Pg. 62).

What a powerful picture of the role of the intercessor in God’s plans. God has given instructions concerning the watchman on the walls in Ezekiel 33 and to those who kept watch during the building of Jerusalem’s walls during

Nehemiah's day. Today the Church is once again being called to the walls of our cities as watchmen.

We have a great historical model of what it means to be watchmen and how that can affect world history. I'm referring to the Moravian prayer watch that began in 1772 and lasted for over 100 years. Here are excerpts from an article by Leslie K. Tarr about that astonishing prayer movement: "Fact: The Moravian community of Herrnhut in Saxony, in 1727, commenced an around-the-clock prayer watch that continued nonstop for over a hundred years.

"Fact: By 1792, 65 years after the commencement of that prayer vigil, the small Moravian community had sent forth 300 missionaries to the ends of the earth.

"Could it be that there is some relationship between those two facts? Is fervent intercession a basic component in world evangelization? The answer to both questions is surely an unqualified 'yes.'

"The heroic 18th century evangelization thrust of the Moravians has not received the attention it deserves. But even less heralded than their missionary exploits is that one-hundred-year prayer meeting that sustained the fires of evangelism!

"During its first five years of existence, the Herrnhut settlement showed few signs of spiritual power. By the beginning of 1727, the community of about three hundred people was wracked by dissension and bickering, an unlikely site for revival.

"Zinzendorf and others, however, covenanted to pray and labor for revival. On May 12, revival came. Christians were aglow with new life and power, and dissension vanished and unbelievers were converted.

"Looking back to that day and the four glorious months that

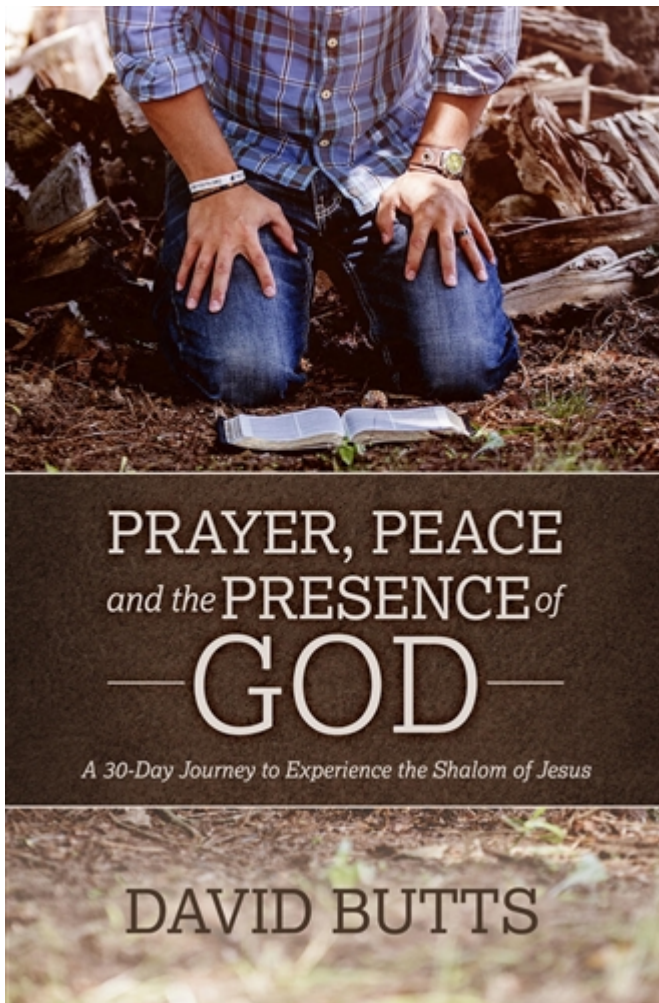
followed, Count Zinzendorf later recalled: 'The whole place represented truly a visible habitation of God among men.' A spirit of prayer was immediately evident in the fellowship and continued throughout 'that golden summer of 1727,' as the Moravians came to designate that period. On August 27 of that year, twenty-four men and twenty-four women covenanted to spend one hour each day in scheduled prayer. Some others also enlisted in the 'hourly intercession.'

"'For over 100 years, the members of the Moravian church all shared in the "hourly intercession." At home and abroad, on land and sea, this prayer watch ascended unceasingly to the Lord,' stated historian A. J. Lewis."

The Church today is increasingly looking to the example of these godly Moravians and their 100-year prayer watch as a model of where God is calling us today. The spiritual deterioration of our world and the Church's desperate need for revival, demand a response as radical as that practiced by those at Herrnhut.

The exciting thing is that it is beginning to happen. Several years ago, my wife and I spent three days at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, where hundreds gather for prayer and worship that ascends to the Father 24 hours a day, seven days a week. God is raising up similar models of unending praise and intercession in cities around the U.S. Even individual churches are looking for ways to establish continual rhythms of prayer.

We're beginning to see prayer, not as a quick fix, but a way of life that opens the door for God's power to be poured out upon us. If you are in a city where there is a Watch of the Lord operating, please become a part of that group. If there is no place of continual prayer near you, begin to pray, asking God to raise up those who are willing to take prayer to a whole new level in your community. Let's be willing to pay the price to see revival come to our world!



PRAYER, PEACE, and the PRESENCE of GOD by David Butts

As believers, we are supposed to walk in the peace of Christ, yet we all have stressful issues and circumstances that rob us of this peace. Subtitled “A 30-Day Journey to Experience the Shalom of Jesus,” *Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God* powerfully encourages the reader on how to hold onto that peace in any circumstance.

The author, David Butts (1953-2022), started writing this book and 10 days into it he got word that he was in stage 4 with a rare form of lymphoma. God allowed him to live in a greater way for five additional years of full-strength ministry. Dave has challenged readers in *Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God* to seek after His best life, no matter what it holds.

His 30-day devotional will encourage, inspire and challenge you that you, too, can experience and walk in the peace of Jesus no matter what circumstances you are walking through.

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