

The Watchman of the City

“Devote yourselves to prayers, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.” (Colossians 4:2-4)

They are called to serve in the Police and Security department. They are the policemen scattered all over the city, in different streets, roundabout, in front of stores, supermarkets, banks, schools, universities, hospitals, courts, prison, embassies, government offices, stadiums, airports, etc. Day and night, during holidays or feasts they work in shifts and in continuous service. They work hand in hand receiving and carrying responsibilities without gap or interruption. Their uniforms vary and they wear stars or symbols according to their ranks or designation. Some of them are low ranking, and they obey and execute the orders of those higher ranks over them, but all are under one authority, the law of the city.

They are the watchmen of the city. What is their mission? They observe everything carefully. They watch the people around if they follow the rules, and arrest anyone they see rebellious or breaking the rules of the city. They stop or warn any person who is a wrong doer and they may even take him in front of authorities to be judged! Those policemen, the more they are dedicated and the more they are faithful to observe and execute the law, the more regular the system will be, and the more the city is secured. Ultimately, people will become happier and be blessed, for righteousness and peace will reveal.

From the example of the policemen, we will elaborate the above passage from the Bible. God through the letter of Paul to the Christians at Colossi is speaking to us today. Paul addressed his letter to the community of believers who are good followers of Christ Jesus, but were affected much by outward forces. Paul spoke to them about the supremacy of Jesus Christ, and the freedom they received in Him. He tackled with them the rules of the Holy living and finally instructed them about the importance of prayers in their new atmosphere:

A. Devote yourselves to prayers: To devote means to dedicate, consecrate, provide, and give all what you have for a certain purpose. **Prayer** is speaking to God. Prayer is the holy time that a Christian communicates and spends beautiful time with God. As the attitude of the policemen in the service that we spoke above, we also should do the same. Let us dedicate our mind, our spirit, our thoughts and our time to prayers. To communicate with God through prayers it needs concentration. We need a quiet place because many disturbances may try to draw away our attention to something else. Many evil spirits try to destruct our thoughts, bring us away from the spirit of prayer, and hinder our speaking to God; So we need to teach ourselves how to concentrate on every thought in us in order to speak with God, our Father. Praying for one, two, or fifteen to thirty minutes may be easy. But for 1 to 2 or 3 hours, or for more prolonged period of time per day is difficult to achieve. It needs a lot of perseverance to pray in whatever situation and time we are in. But this will become easy to achieve, if we consider in our mind that God is dwelling and walking with us, and He is always in the mid of every situation. From that concept the continuous speaking to God will become feasible, and it will be easy to build up prayerful life from few minutes to few hours and more.

Devote yourselves to prayers. *“And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” (Ephesians 6:18a)*

1. Intercession or prayer for others: “Pray for us, too.” Intercession is the umbrella that covers one another. With the canopy of prayers of others for us we are protected from the evil ones and our needs

are satisfied. We must pray for one another, our leaders, our friends, our love ones, our church members, our family members, our colleagues in the workplace, our master and finally to pray for others before ourselves. The committed policeman protects other before himself.

2. Supplication or seeking God’s will. Whatever type of prayers we pray it should be finally, directly or indirectly dealt with the following two purposes: *First*, **“that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ.”** This is the new role of those who belong to the kingdom of God. This kingdom is not inclusive to us only, but to expand and reach other people who are away from God by preaching the good news of eternal life, i.e. Jesus took our sins and died on the cross instead of us, raised from death on the third day, and whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. *Second*, **“Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.”** This mystery we can tell it in few words, but to deliver it fully to others in practical life, we may face difficulties, and the outcome would be less than the optimum the way it should be. In the above passage, Paul was writing from the prison. He was in chains for preaching the gospel. But, he did not ask prayers for his personal needs, or that he would be released from the prison, but he asked for God’s will how to preach the Gospel.

B. Being watchful: Like the policemen, we are to always watch and pray for the city and for the workers in the city. A prayerful person may not repeat the same prayer every now and then because a dynamic change would be there. We could follow and observe the moving of the Holy Spirit about what to pray for, and become observant and assertive on warning against the evil forces; what Satan is trying put anew in the battle, where evil spirits are hiding and what strongholds are present around. As the policemen march around the city, we, the prayer warriors should do the same; observe and pray for the sinners and specifically for all kinds of sins around, e.g. the drunkards, the sexual immoral, the thieves, the gamblers, those who fraud, etc. We must bind demons, rebuke Satan and cast out evil spirits from those under bondages. Let us do these with confidence for we have been given authority from the Lord Jesus, **“...to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.” (Luke 10:19)** Also, let us pray for those who are in need and to those who are in troubles. Pray for the sick to gain healing. Pray on the spot once we recognize the problem wherever we are; in the car, walking on the street, in the office, etc. Everywhere, we are called to pray with different types of prayer as led by the Holy Spirit, and as we watch the city which God has entrusted in us.

C. And thankful: We must be thankful for every prayer requests answered by God. Thanksgiving is speaking about the turnover of answered prayers and the movement of the Holy Spirit to answer our petitions to the Lord. The rate of thanksgiving also tells about how much our prayer agree with the will of God and to what God wants us to pray for. It also speaks about recognition of positive things God is doing for us, our contentment to what God is giving us, and His faithfulness to fulfil the promise He proclaimed to us.

Dear brothers and sisters. The new style of living you now into after you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour is being a faithful watchman or a watchwoman of the city, and to bring everything in details to God our Father in prayers. Forward to Him all the world’s trespasses and all the world’s needs, so righteousness will prevail and the Kingdom of God will advance. As the policemen dedicate themselves to service and accomplish missions, you are the praying soldiers who can do the same. You can be that faithful watchman as you devote yourself to prayers, bringing everything into the hands of our Lord and God. *Are you willing to be the watchman of the city?*

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to watch and pray for the city that I am living in and live a prayerful life, trusting you that you will be the one to answer all my prayers according to your will and your glorious riches in Christ Jesus my Lord, Amen.*