

Lenten Prayer Group Guide

Week 3

As usual, there are four sections to this guide in addition to the option to listen to or sing a song. Plan to spend about a quarter of your time on each section, adjusting accordingly whether or not you choose to use the song.

Feel free to print out this guide to give to the people in your group. It is also available on the website under the Lenten Prayer Event.

Also, it is important that you make sure that everyone understands at the beginning of each prayer time that anything said during the time is confidential and should not be shared outside the group without permission.

Praise

We start with praise because it helps us to focus on God's character and tune into His presence with us.

Go around your group having each person read a single verse from the psalm and immediately follow their reading with a brief prayer of praise to God. Feel free to go through the psalm multiple times as you have time.

Psalm 130:1-7 (NIV)

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;

2 Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be
attentive to my cry for mercy.

3 If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord,
who could stand?

4 But with you there is forgiveness, so that
we can, with reverence, serve you.

5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

6 I wait for the Lord more than watchmen
wait for the morning, more than watchmen
wait for the morning.

7 Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with
the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full
redemption.

Confession

Have you ever failed to consecrate yourself to God? Of course you have, because undoubtedly we all have and we all will again. Even the disciples did.

Read aloud the following excerpts from Mark 14:33-38.

He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he became deeply troubled and distressed. He told them, "...Stay here and keep watch with me."

He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed...

Then he returned and found the disciples asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

Not one of us is perfect. Spend some time as a group confessing where you have missed the mark, "gotten drowsy while on watch," or failed to follow through.

Consecration

In *The Scandal of the Kingdom Workbook* Jan Johnson writes, "If someone had asked these disciples, 'Are you willing to watch with Jesus?' they probably would have said yes. But they...had not yet trained their bodies to follow Jesus even when they were afraid or unsure. So Jesus advised his friends to be watchful in...prayer. Staying alert would have provided them with a level of responsiveness and power that would otherwise have been impossible for them to achieve. As it turned out, they were not able to stand with Christ when his enemies confronted him, because they had not been watchful in prayer."

We don't seek to consecrate ourselves to make ourselves more worthy; this would be forgetting grace. Consecration strengthens and prepares us for the challenges that lie ahead by creating more room in us for the Holy Spirit to transform and empower us. It is God's provision for us, if we will take it.

Jesus asked Peter, James, and John to keep watch with him and to pray to help them with the coming temptations. Keeping watch *with* Jesus is not just asking for help. It means we are praying **with** Jesus; we are joining with Him in His prayers. We never have to pray alone! He invites us to pray with Him. And keeping watch with Jesus helps us to see things from His perspective.

Let's take some time now to silently ask Jesus the following questions. Then, "watch with Him" in silence and see what He shows you.

- Jesus, how do You see me? What are You praying for me right now?
- Is there anything You want me to be alert or attentive to? Where do I need to "wake up"?

Does anyone in your group want to share what they "heard" from Jesus in answer to these questions?

Asking

Another interpretation of what it means to “keep watch with Jesus” is to remain spiritually alert or attentive, to stay awake!

To consecrate ourselves in this way is not passive. It is active. It requires effort! We need His help to keep our focus on Him and actively depend upon Him in prayer. Daniel Henderson, pastor and author, has been quoted as saying, “Prayerlessness is my declaration of independence from God.” Jesus is calling His church to pray! Just as the watchmen in Psalm 130 are sure that the dawn will come, we can be sure of the Lord as we watch with Him.

Take some time now to ask that we, as individuals and as a church, would wake up, focus on Jesus more attentively, and declare our dependence upon God by growing in prayer.

Song *(optional)*

Conclude by worshiping God with the following song. Click on the song title to hear the song.

Awake My Soul

Verse 1:

There is a sound I love to hear
It's the sound of the Savior's robe
As He walks into the room where people pray
Where we hear praises He hears faith
(repeat)

Chorus:

Awake my soul and sing
Sing His praise aloud
Sing His praise aloud
(repeat)

Verse 2:

There is a sound that changes things
The sound of His people on their knees
Oh wake up you slumbering
It's time to worship Him

Chorus

Bridge 1:

And when He moves
And when we pray
Where stood a wall now stands a way
Where every promise is amen

And when He moves

Make no mistake

The bowels of hell begin to shake

All hail the Lord, all hail the King

Bridge 2:

Hey oh

Oh let the King of glory enter in

Hey oh

Fall down on your knees and worship Him

Hey oh

Let His praise rise up don't hold it in

Chorus

Source: LyricFind

Songwriters: Brooke Ligertwood

Awake My Soul lyrics © Capitol CMG Publishing