

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor

Lesson 18: “Watch Over and Stir Up Each Other”
Scripture: 2 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 1

Goal: To embrace and fulfill our covenant relationship with God and one another.

Objective: To understand the importance of watching over and stirring up each other to good words and works.

Covenant Segment:

“We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work.”

Overview:

As Christians, we are mandated by God to watch over and stir each other to every good word and work. Shortly before his execution, Paul wrote his letter to his “son” Timothy and all who declared to follow Christ. ¹Paul gave final instructions and encouragement to Timothy by instructing him to remain strong in the gospel of Jesus Christ and not to shy away from the knowledge of the truth. (2 Timothy 3:14-15) We, who are united with Christ and with each other by the aid of the Holy Ghost, are given spiritual discernment that enables us to watch with care and not allow others (especially believers) to perish. We are our brothers’ keeper and responsible to encourage them in their spiritual growth. This also means we must be sensitive to their needs and provide a source of comfort. This ought to be the responsibility of the whole church in order to maintain a strong healthy and vibrant church.

2 Timothy 1:6

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by putting on of my hands.” (King James Version, KJV)

Introduction:

This segment of the Church Covenant conveys some important concepts that the church should not gloss over. Why is it important to watch over, pray for, exhort, and stir up (keep in full flame) each other? The root of this watch-care is the all-seeing eye of God—and the emphasis of that divine observation is on care, or careful watching. Watchful caring entails noticing one another, paying attention to another’s state of mind and needs. It entails looking for evidence of spiritual growth or slippage and responding accordingly.² All members including our pastor and church leaders need our watchful caring attentiveness through prayer. (Hebrews 13:17)

¹ Tyndale (1996), **Life Application Study Bible (NLT)**, Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Wheaton, IL

² Turner, William C. (2002). **A Journey through the Church Covenant**. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press. 94

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Question 1: Why are Christians responsible to watch over each other?

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3: 16, ESV)

- ***A church will never be as strong and vibrant in the service of God as it ought to be until it shares in this ministry of watching over and stirring up one another.***³
- ***We are mandated under God not to idly allow a soul to perish—especially one who has accepted Christ.***⁴

Summary:

Unlike Cain, we must understand that we are our brother’s keeper, or many would be subject to stumble and live unfruitful spiritual lives. (Genesis 4: 9-10) Unless we watch over one another, spiritual growth could cease, sin would overtake us, and godly living could take a downward turn. Weak links within the body of Christ affects the strength and often the demeanor of the whole.

Question 2: How does intercessory prayer support our efforts on behalf of others?

“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to in a manner walk worthy of the Lord fully pleasing to Him bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1: 9-10 ESV)

Intercessory prayer is not merely some stopgap measure we invoke when we have tried everything and all else has failed. It should not be considered a last resort but a first resort.⁵

Summary:

Without the intercessory prayer of the saints, many of us would have fainted under the pressures of life. There is an urgent need for unceasing prayer, mutual concern and oversight within the church otherwise believers might become discouraged. Postures for intercession involve watchful and sensitive care, serving one another with love, humility, confidentiality, and obedience to the Holy Spirit.

³ Turner, William C. (2002). **A Journey through the Church Covenant.** Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press. 93

⁴ Turner, William C. (2002). **A Journey through the Church Covenant.** Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press. 94

⁵ Turner, William C. (2002). **A Journey through the Church Covenant.** Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press. 95

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Question 3: *How should Christians stir up one another for every good word and work?*

But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3: 13, ESV)

- *By being examples of love, good works, and exercising our spiritual gifts, others can be motivated to serve.*
- *The aim is to motivate others to obedience and service for God.*

Summary:

By speaking and teaching the Word of God, we can stir up and strengthen each other. Most of all our obedience and application of the Word of God to our lives can powerfully inspire others toward steadfastness in the Word.

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Where we are in the Church Covenant... *

HAVING BEEN LED, AS WE BELIEVE, BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to give it a place in our affections, prayers, and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, towards its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Savior in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

Each month we will include a copy of the Church Covenant and highlight the current lesson. It is our hope that this will give the larger context for the passage being studied.