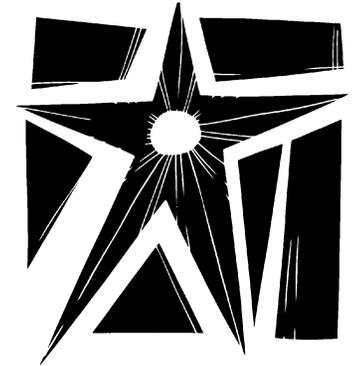


Night Watch, Vigils, prayed Pre-dawn

themes: vigilance and deep listening, mystery and silence, surrender and trust

Night vigil is a time for deep listening. Our prayer travels deep into our soul space, into the essence of our being. Like Jesus, keeping watch the night before he died, we keep vigil with those who wait alone. The darkness has a special kind of soul. We lean into the darkness and grow wise. In the middle of the night we hold hands with trust and surrender to the One who sees without a light. When we rise in the middle of the night, our prayer can simply be:



- Waiting in the silence, waiting in darkness, listening with love.
- Prayer of surrender without words. Prayer of intent.
- Deep yearning. The silence and darkness are healing.
- Keeping vigil with Christ, who is always keeping vigil with us.
- Keeping vigil with those who wait alone.

Traditionally this hour was prayed in the heart of the night. However, due to the fragility of the human condition, it was moved to the early morning hours when it was still dark. It became a pre-dawn prayer. The theme for this hour is vigilance. There is a difference between waiting and keeping vigil. Anxious, fretful, impatient waiting is nothing more than waiting. Waiting with purpose, patience, hope and love is *vigilant* waiting. As we rise from sleep in the heart of the night, we keep vigil with eternal questions. These eternal questions are infinite longings that have taken root in the ground of our being. We do not look for answers; it is enough to wait in the darkness of love's yearning.

Prayer Guide

For God alone my soul waits in silence. Ps. 62:1

Opening

My soul years for you, O God,
I keep vigil with you through the night.

Contemporary Psalm

O Sentinel of the night skies,
Attendant of my soul's yearnings.
Drawn into the night silence,
I keep vigil with eternal questions.

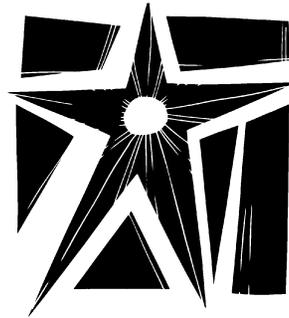
All through the night watch
I seek you without words.
Listening to the sound of silence,
I lean into the song of darkness
With infinite patience I wait for you.

Keeping vigil with eternal questions,
I do not look for answers; it is enough
To wait in the darkness of love's yearning.
My soul is my night light; I am not afraid.

Psalm 42, 63, 119:145-152

Keeping Vigil

Light a candle and sit in darkness. Keep vigil with your life. Keep vigil with those who wait alone. Keep vigil with Christ who is always keeping vigil with us.



Prayer

O Guardian of our Lives,
Through our joys and our sorrows, you keep watch.
Through our days and our nights, you keep watch.
Through the passing of our years, you keep watch.
In our youth and our aging, you keep watch.
In our destruction of the earth, you keep watch.
In our caring for the earth, you keep watch.
In the midst of the violence on our earth, you keep watch.
In our peaceful times, you keep watch.
In the seasons of our hearts, you keep watch.
Through the seasons of the years, you keep watch.
Teach us, like you, to keep watch, and give us vigilant hearts. Amen.

Prayer

O Love Divine and Mysterious...
Take me down deep to the holy darkness of Love's roots.
Let me become one with the One I love.
Draw me into the depths. Night prayer is deep prayer.
Let me go deep. Teach me the art of waiting with patience
that I may grow strong, loving, and wise.
Let me borrow your eyes, O Beloved.
Then I shall see in the dark.

**I have seen too many stars
to let the darkness overwhelm me.**

-Macrina Wiederkehr

**Prayer goes deep at night. Images dissolve.
There's only God and silence, kindness and grace.**

-Coleman Barks