

## **“First Watch” Touch Points for Evangel’s Prayer Vigil team**

**For the week of February 5, 2017**

### **Sweet-Smelling Incense (Exodus 30:8-9)**

*As Evangel faces change in 2017, we recognize how important prayer has been—and will continue to be—as we participate in the unfolding of God’s plan. Our Touch Points reflections come from “The One Year Book of Praying Through the Bible” by Cheri Fuller (Tyndale, 2003).. Today’s reflection is especially appropriate as we have an Open Forum regarding our succession planning.*

**READ:** Each evening when [the priest] tends to the lamps, he must again burn incense in the Lord’s presence. This must be done from generation to generation. Do not offer any unholy incense on this altar, or any burnt offerings, grain offerings, or drink offerings. *Exodus 30:8-9*

**REFLECT:** The priests in the Old Testament nurtured the tender flame—symbolic of the prayers of the children of Israel—to make sure the fire didn’t smolder and die. They burned only special incense on the altar so that the continual sweet fragrance wafted before God. Today we no longer have to burn candles or incense when we come into God’s presence because we can freely fellowship with him anywhere. Yet sometimes we place other things on the altar and allow the busyness of our days to cause our prayer life to smolder. We lose precious one-on-one time with God. When we pray, we connect with the Lord and climb into the shelter of his love. It is in our quiet time with God that we seek answers and find guidance. Is daily prayer a part of your life? When you make prayer a priority, you will walk in closeness with the Lord. Prayer not only strengthens you, it is also a sweet fragrance before a God who longs to talk with his children.

**PRAY:** *Father, I love the fact that you want to spend time with me. Thank you for our sweet fellowship together. Help me to teach others by my example the importance of daily prayer and fellowship with you. Sometimes I let so many things get in the way of our time together. Today, Lord, I will reserve a portion of my day just for you and me!*

**QUOTE:** Prayer is a kind of calling home every day and there can come to you a serenity, a feeling of at-homeness in God’s universe, a peace that the world can neither give nor disturb. A fresh courage, a new insight, a holy boldness, through calling home that you’ll never, never get any other way.  
*Earl G. Hunt Jr.*

#### **ADDITIONAL PRAYER PROMPTS**

- Use the Pause to Pray as a guide to focus on other concerns through the week. Copies can be found in the lobby and in the Archive section on the website ([evbapt.org/archive](http://evbapt.org/archive)).
- Reflect on this week’s worship service—the music, Scripture, Pastor Dave’s message\* “Days of Elijah—I’ve Seen Fire...” (1 Kings 18:36-38)—that all will help as you go through this week; for your own walk with Christ, and that you may be a blessing and witness to people you have contact with during the week.
- Continue to pray for opportunities to invite people to our services and to become engaged in spiritual discovery with the people of Evangel in other ways as well. Ask the Lord to open doors of conversation, connection and compassion with others to enable that engagement this week.
- Pray that God will bless our succession planning efforts. Pray for the church in Wheaton that is preparing a response to questions from our Negotiating Team for a meeting on February 10. Pray that from that meeting will come a clear sense of God’s direction in 2017, building on lessons learned and faith tested (but hopefully strengthened) following several opened—and closed—doors in 2016.

\* a podcast and other materials from the service will be posted on the website by Monday.

*Touch Points is e-mailed every Friday, posted on the website ([evbapt.org](http://evbapt.org)), with printed copies available in the lobby.*

*To be included in the weekly e-mail, use the Contact Us form on the website and request “add me to the Prayer Vigil list.”*