

# Speaking to the soul



## Alert and clearheaded

**You are all children of the light and of the day; we don't belong to darkness and night. So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded. 1 Thessalonians 5:5-6**

When I was in my teens, I did a fascinating six-week course at a local fire station. Because it was held over a number of weeks, I got to know the firefighters and became familiar with the atmosphere of the station. Most of the time it felt very relaxed, but it was also clear that they were ready at any moment to respond to a call. When the deafening bells sounded, they responded instantly. As they ran, they were putting on their jackets and within moments they were all on the fire engine and heading out of the station. It was an impressive performance and gave me a wonderful picture of what it means to be alert. That was precisely Paul's message to the Thessalonian church. Jesus might return at any time and so they needed to ensure that they were always ready for it.

Paul told his readers that they needed to have clear heads, and contrasted this with those who drink too much. Intoxicating drink is a challenge in every society, and it was clearly the case in Thessalonica. Everyone knew what a drunk person looked like and it was a warning to the church. A drunk person is always a pathetic sight because they are, to a greater or lesser extent, out of control. This is precisely the opposite of what his readers needed to be as Christians. They should be fully in control and properly equipped. Paul gave a quick summary of the spiritual equipment that they needed. They should be protected by the armour of faith and love and wearing, as their helmet, the confidence of salvation (v8).

The church of Jesus Christ faces huge challenges in our day, and the only way that we will be able to serve God effectively is by being alert and clearheaded. Firefighters maintain their alertness by being continually tested and

trained. I recall that they would often do training exercises to ensure that they knew how to use their breathing apparatus and respond to the wide range of fires that they might face. As Christians we also need to ensure that we are maintaining a high level of readiness so that we will serve God faithfully.

## **QUESTION**

Do you consider yourself to be alert and clearheaded?

## **PRAYER**

Loving Father, in the power of your Spirit help me to be fully ready to serve you. Amen

