

# MAYOR'S CORNER



A BLOG BY MAYOR JAMES D. STEWART, JR.

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## 168 HOURS. 168 WATCHMEN. ONE BELOVED CITY.

This past week, Irondale gathered for our **Sixth Annual National Day of Prayer Breakfast** — and I walked out of that room different than I walked in.

The program took the shape of a **fireside chat**. For about twenty minutes, I sat down with **Dr. Henry Panion**, composer, producer, professor in the UAB Department of Music, and owner of Audio State 55 Studio, for an honest, unhurried conversation about **purpose, mentorship, and what it really means to build the Beloved Community**. When the chat ended and the room emptied, people didn't just leave inspired. They left searching for their call.

Before I go further, I want to honor the watchmen who hold the mantle for Irondale all year long: **Bishop Whitlock, Pastor Fields, Pastor Matt Andrews, Pastor Machen, and Pastor McClure**. Psalm 127 reminds us that unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman watches in vain. These pastors stand in the gap. They pray when no one is looking. Irondale is stronger because of them.



### Then came the crazy thought.

You know how I feel about crazy faith. **Crazy faith makes you have crazy thoughts.**

What if the National Day of Prayer wasn't one morning a year, but **every hour of every day of every week?**

There are **168 hours** in a week. What if we had **168 people**, one for each hour, committed to praying for the City of Irondale?

### One person. One hour. One city, covered.

*"Pray without ceasing."  
— 1 Thessalonians 5:17*

That isn't poetry. It's a blueprint. With 168 of us, Irondale would never go a single hour without someone lifting her before the Lord, a continuous covering, around the clock, around the calendar.



### Three P's.

That God would **protect** our city — our families, our first responders, our students, our streets.

That God would **provide** for our city — jobs, housing, opportunity, and dignity.

That God would **progress** our city forward, faithfully, toward the Beloved Community we are called to build.

### The Call.

I want Irondale to have **one of the largest committed prayer teams of any city in Jefferson County — and one of the largest in the State of Alabama**. Not for a headline. For a covering.

So here is the ask: **Will you take one hour?**

Pick a time. Claim it. Keep it. The Lord already knows which hour is yours.

Galatians 6:9 reminds us not to grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap. A city covered in prayer does not grow weary. A city covered in prayer reaps.

### Do It Every Day.