

Why am I here?

It is time to give serious thought to the emergence of Yahweh's sons and daughters on earth and their involvement in world history. Creation is in labour pains, the earth is calling out, crowds of people are wandering about, having lost their sense of purpose and worth. It is again time to ask ourselves: "Why am I here on earth?" What is my calling, my mission from God? This month, let us quietly come to an understanding of our mandate from God, as clearly and concretely as possible. It is important to take stock and reorient ourselves from time to time, for we ourselves and our time on earth have such incredible value. Such a readjustment helps us to banish unnecessary things from our lives, to shed burdens, and to act with more focus. This also brings with it a new, strong sense of inner contentment. Feelings of depression, especially during the winter season, cannot linger, and we must rediscover thankfulness and love for our Lord. Awareness of our mission and responsibilities releases new energy and allows us to rise from bed in the morning feeling energised. It is not about how seemingly big or small we or others view and evaluate our task from the outside, but rather about allowing the Holy Spirit and our hearts to take over on the inside. Being an intercessor and working in the spiritual realm is so beneficial for society as a whole. Lovingly mentoring someone, investing our energy in resolving issues, speaking encouraging and appreciative words at our place of work is just as valuable in God's eyes as being a well-known preacher in church or having a well-intended life-changing message on any open platform. Our hearts will show us the way and help us to exercise our calling more effectively. And the more concretely we recognize our calling and mission, the more meaningful our lives will be.

Paul wrote to Timothy from prison at that time, telling him to fan into flame the gift of God which is in him, for God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power, love, and a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:6-7). He also spoke of how he viewed his suffering and his testimony for the gospel as a holy calling. Sometimes and in some circumstances, it certainly does not appear that we are living a "glorious" life. This is because we have understood our calling in our own way, and that is precisely why it is so important to raise the question of our calling and mission before God from time to time: "Why am I here?" And through intercession, we can of course also help others, such as those in authority, to recognize their calling and mission from God. He guides hearts like streams of water. (Proverbs 21:1)

Alexander Schlüter

Gratitude – a 3-minute exercise

Pause for a moment and take a deep breath: Close your eyes, and then breathe calmly for a few minutes. Sense that through this time of breathing you are thinking only of the here and now.

Focus your attention on three things for which you are grateful in this moment. These can be quite small things.

Immerse yourself in gratitude: Keep your attention on each one of these things in turn and breathe in for a longer time than usual. Allow gratitude to become not just a thought, but a feeling throughout your whole body.

Express thanks: Say to yourself internally or out loud: *"Thank you, Jesus, for everything that is and I have, and for being here."*

Alexander Schlüter

Israel and the "Raison d'État" – "Staatsräson" in Germany

In her speech to the Knesset on March 18, 2008, the Chancellor Angela Merkel declared the support of Israel's security to be the according to the "Staatsräson" - literally *"Reason of the German State"*. It has been a guiding principle of the Federal Republic of Germany since 1949 that Germany has a historical responsibility for the existence of the Jewish state and its defence capability. The term "Staatsräson" in German (the French version "Raison d'État" is normally used in English!) expresses the fact that Israel's security is also in Germany's own national interest.

As Chancellor Merz stated in an interview on October 5, 2025, one generally has such reasoning and policies for one's own country but not for other countries. He had previously in August imposed a partial arms embargo against Israel – until then, such an unthinkable sanction to come out of Germany

against the Jewish state. The embargo had no military impact on the operational capability of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), against which it was directed, but had a massive political impact on Germany's relationship with Israel. At the same time, Merz has weakened Germany's pro-Israel influence in the European Union, where it is an important voice against the increase in anti-Israel resolutions and the calls for boycotts. However, the Chancellor immediately pledged millions in aid for the reconstruction of Gaza, without tying this to the complete disarmament and disempowerment of Hamas. And he also reaffirmed the so-called "two-state solution", which has failed to materialise for 30 years as the only hope for peace, even though October 7, 2023, confirms that the truth is otherwise and was in fact the ultimate warning against a "two-state solution".

In the areas of defence, intelligence cooperation, research, and innovation, Germany benefits significantly more from Israel than vice-versa, which should be proof enough that Israel's security, as a matter of state policy, is in Germany's national interest. Let us ask for forgiveness and humility for German political actions.

Prayer:

- **Repentance for such arrogance, lip service (talk no action), and double standards. (Luke 6:41f.)**
- **Give thanks for Israel and the blessing we in Germany receive through the Jewish State. (Genesis 12:2f.)**
- **For an unwavering voice of Germany in the EU (European Union) and in the UN (United Nations) against all the demonization and the delegitimization of Israel by so many countries in the rest of the world (Numbers 22)!**

Karin Heepen

Conscription - Freedom, Responsibility, and Search for Peace

The Federal Cabinet has now passed the draft bill from Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, revising the law for liability for military service (conscription). The goal is to strengthen the German army and to recruit around 100,000 volunteers by 2030. Starting in 2026, all men aged 18 and over will be registered and required to complete a questionnaire. Women can participate voluntarily.

From 2028, the recruitment will follow, initially mandatory for men and voluntary for women. With the new military service law, Germany is attempting a balancing act: On the one hand, young people should be free to decide whether they want to serve. On the other hand, the door to conscription remains open. A simple Federal Parliament resolution would suffice in an emergency. The question of duty, freedom, and responsibility for the good of the country as a whole has now been reignited. This is not just about personnel for the German army, but is actually a much larger question: How do we practice freedom and responsibility in our society? Many older people do see military service as a duty for security and cohesion, while many younger people remain sceptical and reject coercion. The reality of being in the German army has changed. It is no longer just training, but also involves dying in an emergency. Anyone who becomes a soldier today knows that they can be on the front lines in an emergency.

We live in a time in which many things are changing.

New economic systems, new forms of statehood, and the search for a new world order. The question is whether this order will be based on power, armament, and demarcation or on some other foundations, such as responsibility, cooperation, and humanity. Much is in question, but we want to make room in prayer for God's words and actions:

- **Spirit of the Lord, clothe us as we pray now for the fragile order of life in Germany and Europe! (Isaiah 11:2f.)**
- **Protect our country from a new war. The wounds of the past have not yet been healed. We long for your peace.**
- **Jesus, we bring you the young generation. They grew up in peace. We pray for their destiny. May they continue to experience peace in the future and bear responsibility with courage and love.**

Alexander Schlüter

Loneliness – the silent pandemic

Loneliness is a silent pandemic that continues to spread across all age groups, cultures, and social classes. Loneliness makes us feel ill. It attacks the heart, soul, and body. And it creeps into the social fabric of our society like a shadow.

A study by the Bertelsmann Foundation (2024) shows that 57 % of young adults in the European Union between the ages of 18 and 35 feel lonely – at least moderately, but many also feel very lonely. In Germany, the figure is 51 %. And 12 % of them actually feel "extremely lonely". Young people in particular complain about deteriorating social relationships. They do not have a sense of belonging. Loneliness is not simply "being alone". We experience it also when we are among others. It is a feeling of exclusion, of a lack of understanding, of not being truly seen. This creates an inner emptiness, even when the environment is crowded. Young people in particular report having "no real friends" and, along with exhaustion, are suffering from the loss of sustainable relationships. Loneliness is dangerous. It weakens the immune system, increases the risk of depression, of heart disease, and of dementia. Studies also

show that loneliness is as detrimental to health as smoking or obesity. It undermines our inner self-image, our sense of having some value in ourselves, being needed, and belonging somewhere. **So, what can we pray for?**

- **For new forms of community: spaces where people meet with honesty, vulnerability, and authenticity. And not just superficial contact, but real relationships. This also applies to our prayer groups.**
- **To experience actual togetherness by having the courage to listen to one another.**
- **That we rethink what living in society really involves: Loneliness is not just an individual problem, but it is also an expression of a culture that values individualism and consumerism more than true connection. We need a "culture of closeness with one another".**

Alexander Schlüter

Back to Life – Rehabilitation of the former hostages

On October 13, something almost impossible happened when the last surviving hostages in Gaza returned to their homeland! 738 days lay between their kidnapping and their return to Israel for these 20 people. 738 days in which they were often kept in the darkness of the tunnels, without daylight, without sufficient food, often without hope, and subjected to much physical and psychological torture. What they suffered there is beyond our comprehension, even as details are increasingly coming to light.

On the day of their release, Israel, and many of us with them, held our breath between boundless joy and quiet horror. Something from Psalm 126 hung in the air, coming alive over the terror-stricken people of Israel: The captives of Zion were returning home – and an entire nation found itself in this long-awaited dream and erupted in jubilation! Knowing full well that liberation is both the end and the beginning.

The road back to life will be a long one. The returnees spend the first few months in secure clinics, receiving personal medical and psychological care. The example of the five female observation soldiers who were freed from hostage captivity at the end of January tells the story of a six-month intensive rehabilitation phase, followed by further months, possibly even many years, of regular physical and psychological check-ups.

After months of intensive rehabilitation, they are slowly learning again how to organize their daily lives and freedom, and to return to normal life in Israel.

Prayer:

- **Let us not cease to thank God for the release of the hostages and to proclaim life over them and their loved ones. The Lord has done great things for them, and great things shall now also be done for their hearts and bodies. (Psalm 126; Psalm 77:14-15)**
- **Declare the name "Yahweh Shalom" (*The Lord is Peace*) over them and their path back to life. God himself is their peace and desires to work in them peace, salvation, and complete restoration. (Judges 6:24; Matthew 11:28)**
- **Pray for messengers of the gospel who will make Jesus come alive to them as light, life, liberator, and healer. (Isaiah 61:1-3; John 12:46)**

Tanja Frank

In deep gratitude for God's work in and for us at all times

Alexander Schlüter and Team