

A Hole in My Prayer Umbrella

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Today's Treasure

Be at rest once more, oh my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.

Psalms 116:7

My friend and I talked quietly as we walked toward her bedroom. I knew I was on holy ground because supernatural grace flowed from her as she lived out the sovereignty of God in this very difficult pathway of life. Her young husband would soon be gone, his body taken by cancer; his soul carried by Christ's sacrifice into the presence of his savior. His fourteen-month battle against this terrible disease was ending, yet there was no blanket of doom suffocating this household. I commented on the courage and strength they reflected and she responded:

"I'm following my husband's example. Even with every bit of bad news, he kept his sense of humor and strong faith that God is sovereign and we can trust Him. That doesn't mean we don't cry but right now I will be for him what he needs. He has a strong legacy of praying women that have guided us. I wish you could have known his grandmother. I know her prayers protected our marriage. In fact, when she died I knew there was a hole in our protection - I could feel it. And you've met his mother. You can see her faith."

I understood my friend's description of the hole in our umbrella of protection created by the deaths of faithful prayer warriors. I think of my friend, Thelma, who told me she prayed every morning for our family. Thelma died about two years ago and after almost thirty years of having this precious woman quietly praying every day, I felt more vulnerable to the enemy's attacks. I once approached two older men in our church and asked them to pray for our son, Chuck, as he embarked on his new ministry position. They walked every morning and smiled at my request, saying, "We already do, and for your husband and you and each member of your family." When John died, I again felt a weakening in the fabric of our spiritual protection.

The greatest rip in our umbrella of prayer came when God came for my mother. When long-term illness forced her to spend many hours in her bedroom, isolated from her children and grandchildren, she would sometimes express her disappointment that she

didn't have purpose anymore. Yet when we walked through some of the toughest years in our lives, she was growing deep roots in Christ by praying for us. We have a long letter she wrote to my husband when we faced terrible church conflict.

She didn't say she was praying for the conflict to be over but rather she was praying for Chuck to reflect Christ in every way. Because of his deep respect for her, he knew this was a message from God and recommitted himself to godliness when his natural response was to react in anger.

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

In this season of life, Chuck and I often remind one another our greatest calling is to pray for our children, our grandchildren, our extended family and friends.

Amy Carmichael, missionary to India, often struggled in a bed of physical pain and weakness. She said when people told her maybe God put her there so she could pray, she knew they didn't understand the hard work of prayer. Real prayer exhausts the *pray-er*, so being prayed for by someone in a bed of illness is even more precious. My mother's prayers for us transformed her bedroom into a sanctuary of worship.

Her time with God through His Word transformed her into a woman whose last prayer, the last night of her life, was, "Be at peace once more, oh my soul, for the Lord has been good to me." Yes, when she left, we all felt spiritually vulnerable.

Sweet older friends who regularly prayed for Chuck, our children by name and me by name, my parents who took seriously their call to bring us to Jesus – each one is now enjoying the fulfillment of their faith. I miss them and their absence reminds me it's my turn. My heart's desire is to mend the hole in our prayer umbrella by continuing their legacy of helping protect our family through the gift of talking with God.

What is your legacy, my friends? Tell us about your praying mother or grandmother.

Originally posted on the Treasures of Encouragement blog: April 2, 2008