

# A Praying Women's Ministry

By Darlene Cranston and Sue Edington

**Editor's Note:** *While this particular prayer ministry is focused on moms and families, the concepts and ideas can be used to launch other types of prayer groups in your church, school or ministry.*

Some years ago a magazine carried a series of pictures that graphically depicted a tragic story. The first picture was of a vast wheat field in western Kansas; the second showed a distressed mother sitting in a farmhouse in the center of the wheat field. The accompanying story explained that her three-year-old son had wandered away from the house and into the field while the mother wasn't looking. The mother and father searched and searched all day, but the little fellow was too short to be seen over the wheat. The third picture showed dozens of friends and neighbors who had heard of the boy's plight, and who had joined hands the next morning to make a long human chain as they walked through the fields searching. The final picture was of the heartbroken father holding his lifeless son who had been found too late, dead from exposure. The caption underneath read, "Oh, God, if only we had joined hands sooner!"

This tragic story illustrates the burden God gave me to "join hands together" in prayer with other moms so that we might not lose any of our children (Lamentations 2:19). By watching my mother's example of seeking God in every detail of her life and family, I saw that prayer makes a difference. Now, I have an overwhelming desire to see my three daughters know the Lord and serve Him. My vision for starting a regular group of moms praying together gave birth to a *Moms in Prayer* ministry in our church.

As we have faithfully come together to pray week after week, we have witnessed many powerful results of our praying. This can best be illustrated through the personal experiences of women in our prayer group.

A new Christian mother who struggled with the loss of her first child through a stillbirth prayerfully persevered through the impossible odds of conceiving again.

*After years of severe endometriosis, conceiving our daughter, Lydia, was a miracle. My husband and I had been Christians for less than a year, and we thought that God was blessing us with this child - that the pain of childlessness was over - but God had blessed us beyond Lydia's limited life. He had blessed us by surrounding us with people who love Him and know He answers prayer.*

*Lydia was stillborn when I was six months pregnant, and I was confused about how God could let it happen. Yet, over the next painful seventeen months of dealing with Lydia's death and trying to conceive again, the Lord faithfully led me through His refining fire. As I struggled with prayer, with trusting Him, with waiting on Him, my ever-loving Father put a burden for me and my needs upon the hearts of other women, The women in **Moms in Prayer** continually cried out to God on my behalf. Their prayers covered needs that I had never shared with them. Their prayers spoke to the Father of healing my heart, conceiving and delivering a healthy child or*

*taking away the desire for children and even for continued strength and understanding from my husband. The greatest cry of their hearts, however was that God would be sufficient for me.*

*Since that time, God has mercifully provided us with a healthy son. We serve a faithful God who sees the beginning and the end. He is a God who saw fit to call women together to pray for my deepest needs, for my continued trust in Him in the midst of the fire.*

Sue, another young mother, has learned that prayer changes us through praying with other women.

***Moms in Prayer** began praying for me soon after I became a Christian. During that time, my husband accepted Christ but was struggling with manic-depression and, I, after waiting for a child unsuccessfully for almost ten years, finally cried out to the Lord with a willingness to accept His will over mine.*

*Shortly thereafter God blessed us with a son, but with that blessing came some difficult days. The stress, lack of sleep, and stressed finances was wreaking havoc on my husband's stability. He struggled daily between swings of anger and depression and euphoria and mania. Our relationship grew strained. As a new Christian, I expected the next day, having fervently prayed, to see a healthy husband. That did not happen. Instead, the following days felt like God had fallen silent. Yet, women I did not know very well encouraged me to keep praying. Part of me said, "If they only knew my circumstances," but I clung to Thessalonians 5:16-18. It was then that God brought a woman from **Moms in Prayer** into my life, and I found myself sharing my struggles and longings with her. She simply said, "God hears every prayer. We will pray for you. Leave it in His hands." I did.*

*Within the year God blessed us with a second child, and I just had our third. Amazingly, God moved these women to pray fervently for me, for someone they barely knew, someone who had never attended a prayer meeting before. Since then, I have "joined hands" in prayer with these women.*

Evelyn Christenson in her book, ***What Happens When Women Pray*** says, "When people start praying together in one accord to our Father in heaven in the name of Jesus and practice praying together, things begin to change... changes take place not when we study about prayer, not when we talk about it, not even when we memorize beautiful Scripture verses on prayer. It is when we actually pray that things begin to happen."

## **Getting Started**

Without a doubt, God desires for us to bring to Him our prayers and petitions. So how do you begin a **Moms In Prayer** ministry in your church? When launching a moms prayer ministry, you may want to incorporate some of these elements.

## **Decide on Your Purpose**

Our prayer ministry is designed for the purpose of interceding for the needs of the moms in the group as well as their children and families.

### **Organize Your Prayer Time**

Our prayer time centers around praise, confession, thanksgiving, and intercession. As we pray through each of these, we use Scripture to guide us in praying effectively. (Several helpful resources for discovering how to pray effectively, and for praying for your children are: *What Happens When Women Pray* by Evelyn Christenson and *The Power of a Praying Parent* by Stormie Omartian.) In addition, an effective prayer group prays in one accord, keeping prayers focused - short and specific. To make the most of the prayer time, each member should have a notebook in which she can keep handouts, and record prayer requests and answers. We also limit our prayer time to no more than two hours each weekly session.

### **Provide Childcare**

Because the ministry focuses on praying moms, providing childcare is necessary. We have hired a couple of childcare workers as well as taking turns to help in the nursery when necessary.

Let us not walk through this life crying out, "Oh, God, if only we had joined hands sooner." Instead, let us be women of prayer who *join hands together* as we "in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present our requests to God" (Philippians 4:6).