

## **PRAYING FOR OUR CHILDREN - OUR STORY**

As children, my son and daughter were any parent's dream. They were obedient, mannerly, and 'no trouble at all'. They both had their own special qualities. My son was introspective and had a quiet strength. My daughter was a natural leader, an excellent public speaker and very civic minded. Most importantly, they were strong followers of our religious beliefs. Their feet were firmly planted in the teachings of our church. Perfect children don't exist but they were as close as I could imagine. As a single parent, they made life easier for me and together we were a close knit family.

My children transitioned into their teenage years and left home for college. Away from home, they became strangers to me. I had expected growth, maturity and independence, but what happened frustrated and frightened me. The choices they made and lifestyles they led defied their upbringing. They ignored my calls, refused to listen to my wisdom and a wedge grew between us. It was a painful experience. The more I tried to draw them nearer to me, the further they went away.

Out of a motherly desperation to 'save' them, I began searching for help. My family talked to my children, without much success. I sought out solace in my church leaders, but was judged for my parenting skills and my children were judged for their abandonment of church beliefs. Professional counseling was out of reach financially. Reaching out to God was my only option. My knees were worn from my intense praying, yet my prayers were not being answered. After one particularly heated exchange with my daughter, I was crying and screaming to God asking for help. A voice said to me, "stop talking and pray". I stopped crying and screaming and simply prayed. To my amazement calm descended over me.

The following weekend, I spoke at a church in Atlanta, Georgia. Before I delivered the message, I asked the congregation to pray for my children. I didn't tell them why, I just asked for their prayers. Without prompting, others asked that I pray for their children. It was then that I realized I was not alone in my battle because other parents were frustrated and hurting too. In response to the cries of parents, before beginning a message anytime I had the opportunity to speak at a church, I asked the congregation to call out the names of their children. The congregation would fill the sanctuary with the names of their children followed by prayers lifted in their behalf. The prayers would be deafening as parents openly released their pain, frustrations, and heartache to the Lord.

I was overwhelmed by the number of people who approached me after each message to share their 'parenting' story. These parents had walked or were walking the road I had so recently traveled. Likewise they felt, as I had felt, alone on their journey. Support and understanding were their simple requests. As a result, I realized that uniting them in prayer was my mission. Praying for our Children, Inc. was born.

Since 2003, I have been able to share the message that we, as parents, have to allow God to work in our children's lives the way He deems fit. If we truly want our children to be saved and come to know God for themselves, they are going to experience trials and tribulations. We have to let God guide them on their journey and pray. "I had dreams but the Lord had plans and His plans supersede my dreams".

Praying For Our Children, is a non-denominational, not for profit organization established to awaken families so that children have the opportunity to live. Prayer awakened me first and through my change I was able to let go of my children and let God take control of their lives. As a result, my son is a successful father, husband and military officer and my daughter is a phenomenal mother, attorney and educator. Both now know God for themselves and are actively involved in Praying For Our Children as testimonies to the power of prayer. It started with prayer and continues with action.

We encourage you to join our efforts. A unified body of those concerned for the well being of children can change the world. None of us are exempt from challenging times with our children. Let us come together and stand in the gap for our children through prayer, programs and service, which is the essence of Praying For Our Children.