

Mom's Day of Prayer

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By Lisa Darden Times Record

The second annual citywide event will be held Jan. 16 at Life Christian Center.

It's natural for mothers to fret and worry over their children. It's also natural for mothers to get together with other mothers to talk about various concerns and issues regarding their children.

One group of mothers, however, is doing more than just talking to one another about their concerns. They are talking to God about their children.

The second annual citywide Mom's Day of Prayer will draw in mothers, grandmothers, stepmothers, sisters and aunts in a concerted effort to pray for the children of the community, state, nation and world, according to this year's event organizer LaDona Whiteley.

The Mom's Day of Prayer is set for 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Jan. 16 at Life Christian Center , 2201 S. 46 th St . According to Whiteley, each hour will begin a new prayer time so participants can attend at any hour most convenient throughout the day. Each hour is led by a leader who opens and closes the hour with prayer.

"Prayer leaders of all denominations are coming together in unity on behalf of our children," Whitely said. "There is nothing as valuable as our children; the power of prayer can and will do more to influence and change lives for the better."

According to Kathy Coleman, the founder for the Fort Smith area event, the idea behind Mom's Day of Prayer was to involve as many churches and members as possible. Each year the event will travel to a new church which will serve as host for that year's prayer meeting.

Last year's event, which was held at East Side Baptist Church , drew more than 225 participants, Coleman said. Prayer participants came from churches in Fort Smith , Van Buren, Cedarville, Alma , Barling, Greenwood , Hartford , Hackett, Lavaca, Watts and Pocola. Event organizers this year are planning on increasing the number of participants and communities this year.

On Jan.10, Coleman, representing East Side Baptist Church , will officially hand over the Mom's Day of Prayer duties to Whiteley and Life Christian Center . Along with the formal transaction, the official Mom's Day of Prayer banner also will exchange hands.

The 9-foot banner, which depicts the day of prayer logo, was made by Coleman's friend Patti Hill, a private school teacher and mother of four, who also attends East Side Baptist Church . The banner will stay on display at Life Christian Center until it is handed over to the next host church in the year 2000.

The idea for the local day of prayer for children came from Coleman, who read about a woman from Brazil , Anna Maria Pereira, who in 1995 founded a national Day of Prayer in her country where 40 to 50 million youths are involved in immorality,

alcoholism and drugs.

Coleman was struck by how one woman was able to organize a prayer movement which now totals more than 15,000 women in Brazil praying daily for at least 15 minutes for their children.

The goal for the local movement is to bring together all denominations to join in unified prayer for the children of this area, Coleman said.

Whiteley cited Lamentations 2:19 as a premise for the 1999 prayer meeting. "Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord, lift up your hands toward Him for the lives of your children."

Whiteley, who leads a daily prayer program, "Prayer Minutes," on Spirit FM 106.3, also cited Alfred Lord Tennyson's: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," as a reason for prayer.

Coleman said that the prayer meeting last year generated a list of 75 concerns or burdens which the praying mothers addressed. Prayer concerns include praying for those who are broken-hearted, lost and crushed in spirit; for single moms to be encouraged that they can guide their children with God; for teens to have the strength to overcome temptations to do wrong; for teen fathers to be accountable for their seed; for parents to stand firm for what is right and lovingly discipline their children; for more family dinners together; and for children and mothers in homes where the dad/husband is not a Christian.

Margaret Burton of Fort Smith participated in the event last year and will attend again this year. "We are the parents of seven children and 10 grandchildren," Burton said. "When we coupled the words we speak to our children with words to God about them, that's when we see amazing results."

So, with bowed heads and clasped hands, mothers throughout the area will meet to pray in unison for the future through their children during Mom's Day of Prayer.