

Powers of Darkness BEWARE! Moms Are On the March

January 1998 Written by: Margaret Burton

Saturday, January 10th, 1998 proclaimed by Mayor Ray Baker A Day of Prayer for Moms was a historic day in Fort Smith . Moms from more than 30 different churches came together at East Side Baptist Church for an all day prayer meeting for the children of our city, state, nation and the world. At the end of this article is a partial list of churches and communities represented. (Not all who registered indicated their home church or community.)

The inspiration for this meeting came first to Kathy Coleman, a member of East Side . After hearing about a movement in Brazil where thousands of Moms pray daily for the children of their country, Kathy could not get away from the thought that we should be doing the same thing in the United States . She discussed this idea with her pastor and others in her church, all of whom encouraged Kathy to get the ball rolling.

Before the initial planning was underway, Kathy decided on a logo, which she showed to a friend, Patti Hill, a private school teacher and mother of four. Patti volunteered to make a banner depicting the logo during her "spare time" over the Christmas Holidays. The result was the beautiful 9' high banner pictured on this page, which will be used for all future City-Wide Moms Prayer gatherings.

Thinking of beginning with a small group of women meeting in her home church, Kathy was not prepared for the avalanche she had set in motion. Little did she dream that before the first meeting could be organized, word would spread across town and to surrounding communities, and her idea would explode into a community-wide gathering that promises to become a state-wide movement.

Beginning at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 5:00 p.m. , the prayer meeting was divided into one hour segments with two prayer leaders from different denominations. These leader would begin and end the hour with prayer and pray as God's Holy Spirit would lead them during the hour. No effort was needed to channel the thoughts of the women. They had come to pray for their children and our children, and were eager to get started.

Many moms stayed for several hours, some all day.

The world over, Mom's hearts are the same, and the unity of heart throughout the whole day was almost tangible. The atmosphere defies description. The overwhelming sense of poured-out love was expressed in a variety of ways. Many women dissolved in tears almost before being seated. Some tears were simply tears of release. Some were tears of repentance for our failures as moms. Who among us has not regretted things done and not done due to ignorance, fatigue, misunderstanding, or just plain unwillingness? But repentance that is true touches the heart of a forgiving and merciful God, who always is willing to create in us a clean heart. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Many tears were shed for wayward children; the pain of the moms of these children was shared by all the others, who "wept with those who weep."

The Bible tells us to pray all manner of prayer. That unforgettable day, all manner of prayer was prayed for children, their parents, their grandparents, their teachers, youth leaders, pastors, etc. What one did not think to pray another did. It was a day that surely moved the hand of God.

It was the general consensus that this must become more than once a year occasion. Women were saying, "We need to get together once a week in small groups to continue what we started today." All who attended the first Mom's Day of Prayer will be watching for the inevitable changes that will be coming as a result of that and subsequent meetings.

Weary pastors, what strength will come to you as your mothers regularly and expectantly gather to pray all manner of prayer for their children, which must include prayer for all the leaders before them!

Since January 10th, calls have come in from churches requesting a list of the prayer burdens that were suggested for the day so that existing prayer groups can adopt these concerns. One group of women in Kibler, not having a van to transport all of them to East Side, had a prayer meeting of their own on January 10 to pray for the gathering at East Side. They later called Kathy and asked for 20 of the bumper stickers, "Praying Moms Make a Difference."

A prayer group in Little Rock has taken as a prayer concern the request that God will fill Arkansas with prayer groups praying for our children. Other local prayer groups are praying in the same way.

Each day Kathy receives calls praising God for prayers already answered and about new prayer groups forming. A call came from a woman reporting that because of MDOP their church is going to begin a Bible Study for the women of their church, and their hope is that the prayer groups will be formed within that group of women.

Another call came with a praise: The caller had placed two requests in the "Burden Bowl" (a bowl into which women dropped written requests). Before 6:00 p.m. that same day, both prayers had been answered! "And these were BIG requests!" she added.

Kathy says "I must admit I have been amazed that some women I thought would never come to an interdenominational Mom's Day of Prayer were there-Oh, me of little faith. I just want to stand up and shout from a loud speaker over the city of Ft. Smith and say to the whole city, "God doesn't care what church you go to. He wants you to know Him, to love Him, to believe on Him, to serve Him, and to have a daily walk with Him. He wants you to witness for Him, but get over it about denominations getting together! We've got to love one another as Jesus loves us! How can we reach out to a lost and dying world if we do not love and respect one another?"

Following is the list of churches and communities represented at the first Mom's Day of Prayer:

Fort Smith: CitiChurch; East Side Baptist Church; First Baptist Church; Christ the King Catholic; Immaculate Conception Catholic; Life Christian Center; Central Christian; Fianna Hills Baptist; First United Methodist; Mt. Zion Baptist; Grand Avenue Baptist;

Community Church; First Presbyterian; Southern Hills Baptist; Homestead Heights Community Church; Harvest Time Tabernacle; Goddard Methodist; Glad Tidings; Evangel Temple. Van Buren: New Vision; Karis Restoration Center; First Baptist; First Assembly of God; Shibley Baptist Church; Cedarville: Cedarville Assembly; Alma: Grace Covenant; Barling: Bethel Baptist; Hartford: Hartford Baptist; Greenwood: First Baptist Church; Watts : Community Free Holiness; Pocola: United Methodist.

Other communities where home churches were not identified: Hackett; Lavaca; Hindsville; Discovery Bay , Hong Kong ; Dallas , Texas .

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