



Stronghold Ministry's The Exchanger

July 2009

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Coping with pain is truly difficult, but the helplessness of watching a loved one in pain isn't easy.

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Prayer is not an afterthought, but a major tool in our support. Please pray with us.

Secondhand Pain

-Terri Fornear

Do you ever feel like you're not going to make it through a situation? Empty of hope and seeing no answers? That is how I feel when I watch someone I love in pain. Whether the pain is physical or emotional, I feel my own helplessness to its full extent. I do not handle these times very well. Anxiety roars and fears chase my heart into hiding. I become paralyzed.

I'm beginning to take tiny baby steps through these times. Psalm 68:28 is one of my first cries. "Summon your power, O God; show me your strength, O God, as you have done before." A great quote from the devotional, *Streams in the Desert*, "He becomes my strength to sit still. What a difficult accomplishment this is! If I could only do something! I feel like the mother who stands by her sick child but is powerless to heal. What a severe test. Yet to do nothing except to sit still and wait requires tremendous strength." He becomes my strength to watch without answers. He becomes my strength to handle anxious thoughts that travel through my mind. He helps me take each thought captive to Jesus. His Life within me carries me through fears I cannot overcome on my own.

To the outside world I may look void of faith and hope. When Jesus was on the cross, they shouted, "Where is your God now let Him deliver you." I sometimes feel like such a failure as a Christian. The battle is in full rage. This is not the time to look at myself or measure my faith. I look away to Jesus, who was not impressive on that cross. He looked like a loser. So I go to Him for that very strength He exerted to stay on that cross.

He's giving me His heart for the one I love who is in pain. He is praying through me for deliverance of that pain, for wisdom for the next step. He is interceding through me. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20). The Lord is my strength.

New Toll Free Number

Tell us your story.
We want to help.
877-230-7674

Coming Events

- **Cancer Support Group** in Dallas. Thursday evenings @ 7 p.m. Call for location - 214-221-7007.



Why I Help Stronghold

-Andrea Rouse

"Andy" is a board member of Stronghold Ministry and has recently battled cancer herself.

In 2003 God led me to become part of a group to participate in and witness a true miracle. I was a member of the church Joe Fornear was pastoring when he was diagnosed with Stage IV metastatic melanoma. Every afternoon from twelve to one, I walked and prayed for a miracle. I prayed lots of other times during that season, but I mostly remember that disciplined, focused prayer time, and how close I felt to Christ during those walks. It has been so inspiring to be able to say I have seen a miracle healing of Joe.

I didn't know when I was walking and praying for Joe that God had a cancer diagnosis for me, too. The sore on my tongue was identified as cancer on July 23, 2007. Everyone who receives a cancer diagnosis begins a journey. Every journey is different, but all share a lot of the same issues. The fear, the treatment, the medical personnel, the insurance, the pain, the medicine and the prognosis are just some of the unknown factors to face and deal with. God had already provided everything I needed in Joe and Terri. They listened to me, prayed for me and loved me. They had answers to so many of my questions because of their experience. God has taught me so much through these cancer seasons. I feel like I've been blessed to have been on this cancer journey. I am so grateful for Stronghold Ministry for walking along beside me. Now I am honored to serve and help in any way I can.

Testimony Time



We are featuring the stories of warriors and caretakers we serve. This month we share some of the journey of Carolyn K. from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

In January of this year at age 42, I was diagnosed with colon cancer. I noticed symptoms for almost a year before I really pursued it with my doctor, thinking it was just stress or nerves. When my gastroenterologist gave me the news, I was speechless. The tears flowed easily, but my brain had suddenly gone on vacation. I couldn't process too much information at one time. I couldn't articulate thoughts and questions the way I needed to. I didn't want to tell my kids or my parents about it. I hoped somehow I could hide this news from them so I could find a way to fix it before anyone got concerned. But I didn't know how.

I am a single mother of three who's used to doing "whatever you've got to do" to make things work. This time, I had to wrestle with the reality that my self-sufficiency was an illusion. Everything – my health, my kids, my work, my life – was in Someone Else's hands. Days later I was in surgery to remove the tumor. That was followed by a one-week recovery in the hospital and a seemingly endless wait for pathology results. The final report said "Stage II" and was loaded with medical terms I couldn't understand. My doctors tried explaining things to me, but I sensed they might be hiding relevant information so as not to upset me. I didn't know which protocol they were following – the kind where they "give you hope" or the kind where they "soften the blow." I don't know if any such protocol exists, so I guess you could say I became paranoid and distrusting. I felt very alone.

I did what I'm used to doing – I took matters into my own hands and researched information for days on the internet, finding out as much as I could possibly understand. I must have thought I could figure out something better and faster than my doctors could, or could point out something they had missed. For some, that exercise is a helpful endeavor. For me, it was a mistake. So much of the information was bleak and hopeless, and who knows how much of it was accurate or really applied to me. Good news didn't register in my brain like the bad news. I truly began to despair. My thoughts became "cancerous" in their own way. They multiplied and harassed me. Who could understand the fog that surrounded me and threatened my hope, my peace, my sanity?

A few days earlier, Joe and Terri Fornear had sent me a care package that I allowed to sit in a corner unopened. I had heard about Stronghold Ministry from a very close friend, and I knew she had contacted them on my behalf. But I also "just knew" that box contained some kind of cancer pamphlets that would help me deal with my impending doom, and I didn't feel like reading about it, no matter how well-intentioned it was. I was so, so wrong! In a quiet moment alone, I took a deep breath and opened it. What a surprise to find a basket of lovingkindness inside! It was so genuine and sweet and included handmade gifts, a book of promises from God, and a daily devotional that has become an integral part of my life. There was also a gift card to Boston Market that made me realize someone out there understood even the practical challenges of my post-surgery diet! Somehow they "just got it" even though they didn't know me. But the best part was the personally signed card that simply let me know they were praying for me. I knew they meant it.

Thus began my journey back to peace. I started emailing my thoughts to Joe, no matter how irrational or confusing they seemed to me. He had been through far worse ...maybe he could relate or understand. Well, he did, and he was able to convey real hope and encouragement from experience and from scripture. Joe reminded me that no matter how lost I might feel, God knows my coordinates. He will not lose track of me and won't let go either! It's so easy to forget that...so helpful to be reminded. I can't say enough about the impact this ministry has had on my peace in a very difficult time. Even now, as I go through adjuvant chemotherapy, I still experience worries that can weigh me down and get me off track. My journey is not over, but I know that Joe and Terri continue to pray for me and my family and will listen to my thoughts and remind me that God is still in control and right by my side. I am so, so thankful for them and the practical work they are doing for those affected by cancer. It's no accident that you've stumbled onto their ministry. I hope you will let them be a blessing to you too!

Carolyn K., Pittsburgh, PA

Stronghold Prayer Room

Please join us in prayer for these warriors

As Stronghold reaches out to these individuals who are fighting cancer (some listed have no evidence of cancer and a few have other serious illnesses), we don't want to neglect the centrality of prayer for healing and continued healing. Will you take a moment to intercede with us for these warriors? It is motivating to know our prayers are like a sweet incense to the Lord (Revelation 5:8).

*Lord, please bring
Your total healing,
strength and
comfort to each of
these You love
so much.*

Revelation 5:8

The twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb,
each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense,
which are the prayers of the saints.

Betty	Mary Sue	Becky	Angela
Mike D	Ed	Frank	Maryann
Brisy	Milton	Lori	Bill
Bekah	Sara	Randy	Tina
Mike P	Rex	Sue	Edward
Donna	Monette	Mr. S	Dianne
Janice	Joan	Susan	Linda
Mr. W	Brian	Mrs. L	Michelle
John	Joanne	Priscilla	Vicky
Bill	Kathy	Stephanie	Beth
Jon N	Sue	Lynne	Tiffany
Rich	Dave	Althea	Rachel
Gloria	Garrett	Kevin	Stephanie
Claudia	Larry	Robbin	Judy
Jeff	Kathy	Amy	Terri
Carolyn	Peggy	Correy	Megan
Laura	Mr. L	David	Ruth & Hank

