

On Wings Like a Dove

A Ministry for the Loved ones of Prodigals and Prisoners

Psalm 55:6

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2 Chron. 7:14

455 South Church Street
Office Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 10:00-2:00
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Prayer Support Groups

On Wings Prayer Support Group
will resume: Monday September 14
at Calvary West
With special break out sessions.

River Oaks Prayer Support
Will continue meeting through the
summer. New monthly meeting
times are Second & Fourth Thurs-
days at 6:30 River Oaks Church
Room #4.
Led by Jeff and Sherye Hall.

First Baptist Church in Sparta
meets for Prayer/Support each
Monday night at 6:30.
Leaders are Joseph and Carolyn
Caldwell

Tuesday Bible Study

We are currently watching the
DVD's "Blow the Trumpet".
Tuesday, July 28, we begin a new
study "Not a Fan" by Kyle Idleman.
The study will be led by Velma
McCloud. Come join us for a
blessing each Tuesday from 12:30
to 2:00 at the On Wings offices!

Praying for Prodigals

Dry Bones Prayer Time for
Prodigals: **6:30pm Monday,
July 13** at our office at 455 South
Church St. in Old Salem next to
God's Acre. Come pray with us for
our Prodigals.

Words from Sandra

On June 6, we offered Pampering
for our families on and were pleased
with the turn out. We had twelve
ladies take advantage of having
their hair cut and styled, pedicures,
manicures, and even a massage given
by one of the family members to
another who was experiencing ar-
thritic pain. It was a great time of
food and fellowship, meeting new
friends, and sharing. It is always a
blessing to watch people who may
not otherwise have the opportunity
to get their personal needs met, come
and be blessed.



One lady said, "It was just good to sit and listen to adult conversation. Everyone was so nice and helpful. I had never had my hair washed in a beauty shop before. Everyone said my hair looked so good. I am so glad I came".

I want to express my thanks to Lisa Shutt who owns the beauty shop. What a blessing she offers each time in opening her doors to us. One of her employees also volunteers his time, Gary Pizzino. They each made the ladies feel special and look special. They are both very giving people and we appreciate their efforts so much.

Karen Caffey and her daughters Kim and Lindsey offered manicures and pedicures. Some of our ladies had never had either and were so pleased with the results. They even went out of their way to provide a cream to help with the pain one lady was having in her knees. Karen, Kim and Lindsey all went above and beyond in the ministry God has called them to. I appreciate very much their efforts to serve our families that day.



Thanks also to all those involved in bringing goodies for the bags and for snacking. Thanks to Melinda Lawson who headed up those efforts with the help of Debbie Hampton, Velma McCloud, Sheila Smith, and Barbara Bonney, (all serve on our Board). It was a great day!

I think of the following passage when I see people giving a service to others: Matthew 25:40 says, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me".

When we act on behalf of someone else and do it as unto the Lord it makes all the difference in the world. We are blessing Him as we bless them. This is what these servants did that Saturday as they literally stooped to wash the feet of those who have traveled a long journey. Let us each seek to do all we do for others as if we are doing it unto our Lord and Savior and it will bring joy and peace to our hearts. We all can have a part in blessing others and it should be our goal to do so daily.



Community Serve

On Wings is privileged to be part of the Community Serve Efforts by Calvary Baptist. Our assigned night will be Tuesday, July 14, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. Please join us as we prepare Treasure Boxes and Hygiene Packets, clean windows, and do general chores at our offices.

On Wings Fall Retreat

Join us Friday to Sunday, September 25-27 at Lake James. Our guest speaker is Lynda Simmons whose testimony is below. The facilities are small, so reserve your space soon. Our theme is "Courage to Change." Cost is \$75.00 and includes the speaker, food, and supplies. Hope to see you there!

FORGIVENESS

By Lynda Simmons

I'm often asked to share my thoughts on forgiveness, for good reason, because forgiveness is something I talk a lot about. In fact, I don't just talk about it; I live it on a regular basis. Forgiveness has become a way of life for me. It's not an easy task to cultivate a forgiving heart but the cost of not forgiving is just too high a price to pay and too heavy a burden to carry. Forgiveness is a way to set myself free. Forgiveness is the true path to peace and it's the path I walk today...

I never saw it coming. One minute I'm asleep in my bed and the next minute my life is spinning out of control! I felt as though I had been swept up in a funnel cloud and with incredible speed and fury my life was destroyed in a matter of moments. When it stopped, everything around me was changed forever. On the morning of July 25, 2004 I received a phone call that our son Brian had been murdered and in that moment I instinctively knew I was different, that something monumental had taken place deep within me and my life would never be the same again. I became a victim in every sense of the word, thus began my journey toward healing and forgiveness. The process of grief has opened my eyes as well as my heart to certain truths I've come to accept about life today. It's hard to forgive those who have hurt us and caused us pain, especially something of this magnitude but for me it was and still is a necessary step in my healing process. If not for my relationship with God and his grace, I wouldn't be here to write this today.

Brian was a Petty Officer in the United States Coast Guard. He worked in search and rescue and commanded the 47' Lifesaving Motor boat. At the age of 24, he was the youngest to qualify for such a huge responsibility. Brian was a lifesaver. He was stationed at Ocean City MD and had come home on leave a week before his 25th birthday. While out with friends in Wilmington, NC he was shot by an 18 year old man who was on probation at the time. Brian and the offender did not know each other; it was a random act of violence provoked by a verbal altercation. One careless act, one bullet, one horrible decision altered the lives of so many people that night and so many victims were created as a result. Obviously Brian's family and friends became victims but so did the offender's family and friends. They also became victims and their lives were profoundly changed. This was most apparent to me the day we all gathered in the courtroom for this young man's sentencing hearing nearly one year later on July 20, 2005. I sat in the courtroom and faced my son's killer for the first time. I was struck by all the people sitting before me. Both sides of the courtroom were filled and I realized the multitude of victims that were created in the wake of Brian's murder. I began to give my impact statement in which I was able to share I forgave him and I watched his eyes fill up with tears and roll down his cheeks. I remember thinking "My God, he's just a kid." He looked at me the entire time and when I looked into his eyes, I experienced something so profound I struggled to put it into words for years. I was caught by surprise when I became overwhelmed with the most powerful feeling of love. For a moment I felt like time stood still and a deep feeling of peace and calm washed over me. *I saw God in his eyes that day*, I saw my own son and I felt as though I had a glimpse of heaven, as if God had removed the veil for a split second and pierced my heart in a way that could never be

undone. Somehow I understood this young man and I were intimately connected to each other, he would forever be a part of my life and it was now up to me to decide what I would do with this divine knowledge. I truly had a sense I was walking on holy ground and I didn't have a clue what it meant! All I knew was I trusted in God to guide me and to provide me with what I needed when I needed it and He has done exactly that.

I recently initiated a Restorative Justice practice known as VOD (Victim-Offender Dialogue). In my case this is a man I met years ago at the National Restorative Justice Conference who is a professor at Campbell Law University in Raleigh, NC. Jon Powell is also a dear friend today along with his assistant, Joia Caron. For the past 16 months we have been working together to facilitate a meeting between this young man and I.

In the meantime I've been given permission to write to him and he is able to write back. I recently sent out my second letter. In my first letter I shared with him my experience in the courtroom. One other memory that haunted me for nearly 10 years was when he took the stand to face me. He made the statement, "I know you probably hate me." I blurted out "I don't hate you!" and I've always wondered if he heard me. Throughout my healing journey I questioned if he really knew I had forgiven him and if it made any difference to him. Of course, I didn't necessarily do it for him; forgiveness is more for the one who is doing the forgiving. I seek the freedom that forgiveness offers me and in that forgiveness is where I find healing. I'm free to remember my loved one's life rather than keep myself bound to the details of his death. Even so I recognize this young man needs to heal too. It matters to me he knows I have truly forgiven him. I believe he is remorseful and I also believe those suffering with their remorse need the opportunity to express it; forgiveness creates a way for one to experience true repentance and opens the heart so God can heal the brokenness inside. In response to my letter, here is an excerpt of the letter I received from James (typed exactly as he wrote it):

'Dear Ms. Lynda,

I pray all is well with you and your family. First I will like to say there is no amount of thanks that I could offer you that would equal the love you have shown, I would need about a hundred more pages to thank you for all that you have done in helping me make this transition as painless as possible. You have been a blessing to me every since the day of my sentencing hearing, I Still hear you saying to me "I don't hate you". All these years I can still hear you voice. I could never forget that day. But it wasn't until I got off the stand that I realize you was doing something I never anticipated or imagined.....you forgave me. Without that I don't think I would have found the courage within myself to keep going."

This letter was enclosed in a card that said- (on the front) *Thank You...I know I could never repay you for your kindness...* (on the inside) *...so I'm asking God to.* What a gift it was to receive this and to know it was a result of my willingness to forgive. As my friend Jon says, this was a response to love. Forgiveness heals.

I'll never understand why my son had to die that night. I'll never know why God didn't intervene and save him but I do know He has been faithful to his word. He promises to bring good out of our circumstances for those who believe and I've witnessed him honoring his promise and using my own suffering to help others. Some of my greatest blessings and gifts have come from my greatest pain and tragedy in life...who am I to deny any of it? *God has truly brought beauty from ashes in my life and I've been blessed by a broken heart.* I trust in God's grace, it has proven to be more than sufficient on my journey. We can't change the past but we can make a choice to move forward and to influence the future in a positive way. I've experienced God's profound love in my life. There's no denying it when you see God in the soul of another. He lives within every soul waiting not only to be felt but also seen by those willing to open up their heart and receive the love that is ever flowing between us all. The eyes are truly a window to the soul and love can be found there when we're willing to look with our heart and see through His eyes...