

Reaching Out To Children Other Than Your Own Grandchildren

Lillian Ann Penner

Why should the blessing of a praying grandparent be limited to his or her own grandchildren? Many children in our churches and among our acquaintances do not have praying grandparents. We have the opportunity to stand in the gap for them. Often, God places people in our lives so we can pray for them.

God has a special heart for children. If we want to have a heart like God, we will have a heart for children. In Mark 10:14 Jesus tells the disciples to let the children come and not to hinder them.

Children today are growing up in a hostile world receiving many conflicting messages by a media driven culture trying to poison their minds. We cannot shelter them from the world, but we can stand in the gap for them and pray a hedge of protection around them.

In 1989, at the age of fourteen, Patty and her parents immigrated to the United States from Colombia, South America. Soon after my husband and I became friends with her family, Patty asked if we would be her surrogate grandparents. We were delighted to accept the role. We have been praying for Patty as she has gone through high school, college, and now medical school. We have many miles between us, but we stay connected with telephone calls, e-mails, and prayer and feel blessed to be part of her life.

Patty wrote us, "God has poured His love to me through your support. You are a gift from God; your prayers and support are constant reminders that God knows what we need, He provides and meets us where we are. Thank you! Your prayers have made a difference in my life. I have been blessed in knowing that you are praying for me."

We have had several opportunities to be involved in the lives of other families. We have been mentoring a young family with three children for a number of years. Their three children do not have a praying grandparent so God has given us the privilege to be their praying grandparents.

Recently, the children's mother shared "I am so grateful God brought you into our lives. I feel more secure and deeply appreciate knowing my children are covered with your prayers. Your prayers have not only blessed our children, they have also blessed our marriage."

Another dear family with whom we have established a close relationship has two teenagers. The mother shared with us, that she feels God puts people in their lives and God knew they needed us. She said, *"You have been a godly role model for us with your marriage, your parenting, your ministry, and your prayer life. You have been the spiritual parents we never had and knowing you are praying for our family has been a huge encouragement. Thank you for your prayers for our family."*

Many times, we have been thrilled to see God working in the lives of people for whom we have been praying. When we see our prayers answered in the lives of others, we are humbled and encouraged in our own faith. We have been blessed to realize that God gave us the privilege to collaborate with Him for these children.

Ask yourself, "What children has God placed in my life?" Praying for children who do not have praying grandparents can be a vital ministry. God will literally expand your family.



Lillian Ann Penner is a retired secretary from public high school in Bakersfield, CA. She and her husband, John, have been married 48 years and currently reside in Portland, OR. They have three married sons and nine grandchildren.

Lillian has been active in church ministry for 45 years, and has led a "Heart to Heart" mentoring program for women, participated in a short term missions trip in Ukraine, volunteered at the Northwest Regional office of Wycliffe Translators, Jose Zayas Evangelistic Association, and Focus On the Family. Currently, she teaches a women's Bible study in her home church.