

Susan's Story:

This past summer I had the opportunity to fly to Portland with the purpose of “reuniting” with several women with whom I used to be in Women’s Group. Another sister also flew in from South Bend for the occasion and the plan was, in addition to getting a quick taste of life in Portland, to have a girl’s weekend get-away on the Washington coast. This trip was a really big deal for me. I hold my relationships with these sisters very close to my heart, and as each one of them moved away, I experienced a great sense of loss. The 2 of us who were flying into Portland for the weekend each encountered great obstacles in our travels, and thought we might not make it. We felt that these obstacles were the Enemy trying to thwart our plans, so our sense was deepened that the Lord wanted to do something with our time together.

And he did.

Three significant things occurred to me from this visit. The first was immediate. Although I imagined that our trip would be like a reunion, and we’d recall shared experiences from the past, – we did nothing of the sort. There was too much to talk about the here and now and future! There was no need to look back – we simply picked up where we left off and moved forward. I believe our relationships all deepened during this brief time together. What links us together is not simply a bunch of memories– it is our life we share in Christ in the People of Praise presently, each day, and our love for one another.

Two other significant things took place as a result of our time together. On Saturday night, following our Lord’s Day dinner, the 8 of us decided to spend time praying with one another. I don’t think any of us anticipated what an intense and lengthy time of prayer would follow. Somehow 2 hours quickly passed. During this time, the Holy Spirit was so alive among us! We had prophetic words for one another and we came against the enemy in a lot of specific areas, doing major Spiritual warfare. It was an amazing time. When we concluded – we were all *exhausted*. But it was awesome.

I flew home energized and renewed by my time with these sisters. This alone would have been a huge gift. But the Father’s love is so generous. I immediately found myself experiencing fruit from our prayer together in ways I had not asked for or expected. The one intention that I *had* raised for prayer was for one of our children who had experienced tumultuous behavior for the past few months. Although behavior challenges were not untypical for this child, they became more difficult and left me feeling distraught, and fearful of some greater emotional problem.

By the middle of my first week home from Portland I realized *I* felt different. I was clear headed, positive, energized and confident as a mother. Why did this feel so different, I asked myself? While having a conversation with the Lord– it all became clear. I saw that previously I had really struggled with fear, confusion and a sense of defeat as a mother. I could see this going back to when we first adopted the children, and I had been pretty

overwhelmed for some time. I saw that Satan had just held a sneaky grip in this area of my life and – I didn't even know it. But NOW I could see it, because I felt "delivered" and free. I was blown away in thanksgiving to the Lord.

In addition, as the summer progressed I was very aware that the child I had been struggling with was just "easier" : happier, less moody, more loving and affectionate, more articulate, more compliant. . . This was a sharp contrast to the anger, unpredictable outbursts, emotional swings and physical aggression that had been typical of the previous months. But I was still leery of claiming the Lord's healing or change in this little person's life. . . after all this child had a history of going back and forth between very challenging periods and then periods of stability, during which I'd be consoled and think everything was fine. Perhaps this was just a lull of stability.

When school started this fall, our child had the same teacher as last year, who also had experienced some very rough months last spring with our child. But after the 3rd day of school the teacher caught my eye and told me that our child is "an angel." A week ½ later I happened to meet the teacher in the hallway at school and she spontaneously gave me a hug and said - our child was doing great. She told me how much she loves our child and how our child has such a "good heart." I was amazed. Through her words I felt like the Lord was telling me how much he too loved our child and how this child indeed has a very good heart. And I felt like he was confirming to me – Our Child *has* changed.

I believe that the intense prayer and spiritual warfare we did on the opposite coast changed my child and changed me. The Lord freed us. These sisters freed us. The distance between coasts was no obstacle. I attribute these changes in my life and the life of our child to the Lord's awesome love and power manifested through the great love and prayer of these sisters.