

Interview with Harry and Gladys Shortenhaus

The subject: Prayer

I asked both Harry and Gladys the same six questions. They had no inclination as to what I was going to ask – only that the topic was prayer. They were good sports and the perfect host and hostess when I stopped by for this interview. (good muffins were served as well!) I only trust that the information shared with you, the reader, will convey the passion they each communicated about the topic of **prayer**.

Question #1 – Has prayer always been a part of each of your lives?

Gladys (ladies first!) –“ As a child I can always remember praying before and after meals. In our early years of marriage, Harry and I would kneel and pray together.

Harry – “Growing up, The Lord’s Prayer was always said and before bedtime we would pray ‘now I lay me down to sleep...’ We also would pray before we ate together in our home. But that’s the big difference between then and now, families have a hard time being at home to eat together anymore so that means you don’t even have that time to pray together.”

Question#2 –Who had the biggest influence on each of your lives as either someone who modeled prayer or someone who faithfully prayed for you personally?

Gladys –“ My parents prayed for me (in private). Back then I think people were more private about things like that. But I know they prayed and that meant a lot.”

Harry – “My Grandma Mary prayed for me.”

Here are a couple of instances from Harry when he was able to see the power of prayer.

“I remember a Youth for Christ program in 1973; it was called Key ’73. Glad and I were chosen to be chairmen in our area. It was a nationwide endeavor to introduce individuals to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Our committee rented the fairgrounds at Clay County in Spencer, IA; the grandstand was filled with especially young people. The speaker we invited was Josh McDowell who couldn't come but encouraged us to have a friend of his, whose name I can't remember now. Our committee prayed and the speaker was great and many people came to know Christ that day. We saw the infield filled with young people who came out from the grandstands to indicate their trust in the Savior. We were so touched and thankful.

Another time we saw (much later) the power of prayer. In the 60's we took part in an activity called Lay Witness Mission. Certain people from the church volunteered to meet with groups from another church and help others to come to know Christ. There were activities where we discussed scriptures and gave testimony of our faith. Many, many years later while we were wintering in Texas we met a man who was a friend of a friend of ours. When he heard my name, he told me that I was the one who prayed with him those years ago and that he had received Christ that day."

Question #3 – Why do you think prayer is so important?

Gladys – "It's all about our relationship with God. Satan likes to distract us from God and heaven. When we pray, we are attached to God and that defeats Satan."

Harry – "I agree with Glad. And besides that, God commands us to pray. How else can we know him?"

Question #4 - When's your favorite time to spend time praying?

Gladys – "We like to pray before meals. I can't really say that I have a set time each day to pray. I'm more likely to send up a quick prayer as things happen throughout the day."

Harry – "My best time to pray is before I go to sleep. I like to say Psalm 23 and then fall asleep while praying."

Question #5 – What one piece of advice would you share with a new Christian about prayer?

Gladys – "Just pray and don't worry about getting the words right. It's the most important thing you can do."

Harry - “You need to keep in touch with God and prayer is the best way you can do that. I agree with Glad, don’t worry about getting the words right.”

Question #6 - Here’s your time to share.....is there anything or any story you’d like to tell people, that had prayer in the center of it?

Gladys – “If you have kids, you pray a lot. Our son, Harold, had brain surgery. I can remember standing by the elevator at the hospital and meeting another woman who also was there with a loved one having medical problems, and she said to me “I don’t know how to pray”. So we just prayed together. That meant a lot.

All three of our kids had polio to some degree and we prayed frequently during those hard days.

We need to know that we can always rely on God to hear our prayers.”

Harry – “When our daughter Barb was young, she had a friend that lived close to us. Her friend and her family did not go to church. This young girl was injured severely, I believe her neck was broken. Chances were good that she would have permanent damage. I remember praying along with others in the area that this girl would be healed. She was! It made a big impact on me to know the importance of being a prayer warrior and then seeing the results of what God chose to do.”

My comments:

What a privilege it was to be able to get a glimpse into the lives of these two people I have become friends with and to see and hear how important prayer has been and still is in their lives. I say “see and hear” because it wasn’t just their words that told the importance of their stories, it was seeing the tears in their eyes as they remembered past events and the joy on their faces as they relived moments in their own personal lives that brought them closer to their Lord and Savior.

Submitted by: Sue Westrum