



The Robbery

BY SHERRIE MACKELPRANG

We were sometimes impatient with our mother's lengthy prayers, but we took comfort in knowing she prayed for our protection.

I grew up in a large family, and my father was often away from home. But my mother took great care to see that each of her seven children was raised with an understanding of the gospel. One lifelong lesson she taught us was the power of prayer.

Family prayer was a daily ritual. Mother always had us kneel at our chairs around the table before we could eat. There she

would give thanks and ask for blessings on our family.

I remember squirming on my knees with my head resting on my folded arms, waiting for Mother to finish the prayer. It seemed as if she prayed for every person she had ever known, including all her children. Even though we were sometimes impatient, we all seemed to take comfort in knowing she prayed for us.

I know it was my mother's faith in prayer that got her through those challenging years when our father was seldom home. I have many memories of walking past my mother's open bedroom door and seeing her kneeling in reverent prayer. I used to wonder if she would run out of things to pray for.

As the years went by, the practice of family prayer around the table continued in spite of the changes in our family. After my oldest brother, John, married and started a family of his own, he and his family moved to California for work. He was working two jobs to take care of his family. One of those jobs was a night shift in a gas station convenience store. My mother always included him and his little family in our family prayers.

Late one night we received a phone call from John's wife. She told us that a desperate man had come into the convenience store where John was working. He was a rough looking man who showed no fear. He threatened John, telling him that he would take his life if he didn't do as told. He motioned for John to show his hands and move away from the panic button that was under the counter. My brother obeyed.

Guided by the Spirit, John calmly began to talk to this man. He struck up a gentle conversation, as if he were talking to a frightened child. He told the man that life really wasn't so bad. He asked the man if he was hungry, and he warmed up a burrito for him. Then John handed the man all of the money out of the cash register.

The frightening man began to mellow around my brother. He seemed to like John. He invited John to meet him around the back of the store where they could split the cash.

My brother thanked him but declined. He knew that going behind the store with the man would be dangerous. The man bid John farewell and slipped around the back of the store, disappearing into the night. John quickly went behind the counter and hit the panic button to notify the police. He went outside, stood under the floodlights by the gas pumps, and waited until the police arrived. When they arrived, the gravity of the situation settled in on John. He knew he was blessed to be alive and uninjured.

The police marveled at my brother's clarity of mind in talking to the man. They were impressed that John didn't panic and make a bad situation worse. The police checked around the building, and to their surprise they discovered that the desperate man had left a portion of the money behind the building.

That day my mother had prayed for John's protection, as she had done for years. She worried about his working alone at night, and she pleaded with Heavenly Father to protect her son.

While not all prayers will be answered just the way we would like, I firmly believe that the power of prayer saved my brother's life that night. I'm sure I will never know just how many times my mother's prayers have been answered with a blessing for each of her children.

Now I am grown and have children of my own. I look to the example of my mother and pray each day for the welfare of the souls who have been entrusted to me. I know that earnest prayer can bring strength and protection to those we love. ■



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