

FASTING AND PRAYING FOR EMMA

By Cecilie Norrung

After my daughter fell out of a window, I thought our worst fears had come true.

My family had just returned from a wonderful vacation. After dinner I let our two children, four-year-old Markus and three-year-old Emma, play in the upstairs bedroom of our fourth-floor apartment. In Denmark, windows open out like shutters. The windows are usually locked, but we had left them slightly ajar during our vacation so the apartment would be ventilated during our trip.

As I was doing the dishes, I suddenly felt that something was terribly wrong. I ran into the living room as Markus came running down the stairs. He was screaming with fear, saying Emma had fallen out of the window—a window about 40 feet (12 m) above a cement sidewalk. I ran down the stairs, repeatedly screaming Emma's name. I saw my little daughter lying on the cement as if she were lifeless. She was completely limp when I picked her up, and I thought my worst fears were confirmed. My husband, who had followed me outside, took her in his arms and immediately gave her a priesthood blessing.

The ambulance came quickly, and Markus and I said a prayer while the paramedics worked on Emma. Soon we were all in the ambulance heading to the hospital.

At the intensive care unit we were quickly joined by family members who came to support us. Markus went home with his cousins, while my husband and I stayed behind, not yet knowing about Emma's condition.

After what seemed like a long wait, one of the doctors finally came in, asking for details about the accident. They said that normally a fall from such a height would have resulted in internal injuries and only a small chance of survival. Emma had a broken pelvis and a concussion, but her scrapes were only superficial. The doctor said an angel must have caught her.

Even though Emma's survival was a miracle, she was still unconscious because of head trauma. My husband and two close friends again administered to Emma. In that blessing she was promised a complete recovery without any lasting problems and that this would be a positive experience in her life. I felt immense gratitude for the power of the priesthood. All my nightlong pleadings had been heard.

Emma came out of her coma four days later. During those four days, friends, members of the Church, and others fasted and prayed for her. I felt the prayers of faithful



IMAGE BY BIRGER/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK



Saints weave around me, strengthening my family and me. I felt as if Heavenly Father had wrapped His arms around me and filled me with comfort.

Our stake had held a fast on the day before she woke up. We believe that Heavenly Father heard our prayers and that Emma's waking up was a direct result of the fast. From there Emma recovered quickly. Five days later she said her first word since the accident, and nine days later she was released from the hospital. She spent five weeks in a wheelchair and then started physical therapy.

About a month after the accident, my back suddenly gave out on me from lifting Emma. A feeling of not only physical but also spiritual powerlessness came over me. How could I continue to take care of her?

One night the guilt of being so powerless became too much to bear. I left the house and found a park bench, where I prayed to Heavenly Father for about an hour. For the first time in my life, I felt the miraculous power of the Savior's Atonement overcome me. All the pain and sorrow I had been carrying was taken from me; all my burdens were lifted off my shoulders after that prayer. Emma was still in a wheelchair, and I was getting regular back treatments, but I was strengthened to carry on.

One year later, Emma could run, laugh, tell stories, and think as a four-year-old should.

We know there is a loving Father in Heaven, who cares for us and knows us individually. He knows what challenges we go through. I will never doubt the miracles He gives us through prayer, fasting, and priesthood blessings. ■

The author lives in the Capital Region of Denmark.



WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE TO TRIALS?

"When difficult things occur in our lives, what is our immediate response? Is it confusion or doubt or spiritual withdrawal? Is it a blow to our faith? Do we blame God or others for our circumstances? Or is our first response to remember who we are—that we are children of a loving God? Is that coupled with an absolute trust that He allows some earthly suffering *because* He knows it will bless us, like a refiner's fire, to become like Him and to gain our eternal inheritance?"

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy, "I Am a Child of God," *Ensign*, May 2016, 27.