

Journey Together

(A Monthly Prayer Guide for Dale & Florence Johnson's prayer partners)

September 2009

Faith Journey

We're thankful to God for how He teaches us important life lessons; sometimes the hard way, and sometimes the easier way.

Since arriving in Burkina Faso, we've learned an awful lot about guarding our faith through tough times and bad circumstances. How many times do we have to deal with the questions, "why do bad things happen to good people?" and "why did God let this happen?"

But we've learned over and over about God's sustaining and redeeming work. Rather than giving us smooth sailing with no problems, God often chooses to work in our circumstances rather than changing them. We often pray and beg God to remove us from our difficult situations. But more often, we should be praying for God to give us the strength to endure, and that we would know His redeeming potential in every situation.

I'm sure we've shared this all before. We've read Philip Yancey's books (like "Disappointment with God" and "Reaching for the Invisible God") and have found them very helpful. I've also just finished a book, "The Cross and the Crescent", comparing, among other things, the Christian and the Muslim views on suffering.

But sometimes, we learn even more from our brothers and sisters who model their faith in tough times. It's not at all easy to watch others who are hurting, especially when we can't do anything about it. But we can learn from them. One such example is the medical situation of my co-director at the CAH, Ounteni. One day, his stomach started hurting with no explanation. Over the next three days, it got worse and worse. In obvious pain, he said "this pain is just too much for me!" Now, I hate to stereotype, but Africans are, in general, very tough people who see pain as part of life. He was definitely hurting. His stomach pains continued through several weeks, three trips to the clinic, one emergency trip to a bush hospital, and an "evacuation" to Ouagadougou. Several doctors and specialists examined him. He tried half a dozen different medications. He endured several body scans and x-rays...all to find a small bump on his liver that the doctors didn't understand. When he was rushed back to the hospital one night with severe pains again, Ounteni was very discouraged. He had already spent over six months' worth of his salary in the hospital, and the problem continued to get worse. Then, one day when I called him, I found that he had really built his trust in the Lord. He said, "I don't know why this is happening, but I know



that many people are praying. Whatever happens, God will work out this situation for my best.” He also admitted to sharing the Gospel and about the CAH to groups of people in the hospital lobby!

Life Journey

Personal and ministry-related events to pray for this month

September 4: Staff meeting at the CAH to plan all of the back-to-school work

September 8: Françoise returns from furlough

September 22-23: Dale visits CURE International in Niamey, Niger?

September 26: CAH Board Meeting

Prayer Journey

Weekly prayer topics to guide you in your prayers

September 1-7: Pray for health in the CAH staff

September 8-14: Pray for healthy relationships and patience between missionaries

September 15-21: Pray for sensitivity to the Spirit’s leading and discernment with needy neighbors, even as the famine draws to a close

September 22-30: Pray for the beginning of the school year at the CAH, that the students’ lives would be changed this year

Specific prayer requests and praises

Praise the Lord for providing the resources to get satellite internet! It’s impossible to express how useful it is as a tool for communicating and sending files back and forth.

Praise that we’ve been able to purchase inexpensive tickets to go back to the US for home assignment in December.

Praise that even though our vacation plans didn’t work, we were able to plan some family get-away time on our way home to the US.

Praise for our cute sons who sing joyfully in their beds!

Pray for Dale’s deputy director, Ounteni, who has had severe medical problems for three weeks. Pray for his health, but also for his finances as he’s already paid a fortune in medical costs. Pray that the doctors would finally discover the real reason for all of his stomach pains.

Pray for Françoise’s return to Mahadaga. Pray for her good-byes to her family and for all of the transitions that will happen in Mahadaga.

Pray for Florence as she prepares and translates a Bible study for the women’s group of our church, which will start September 5.

Pray for the CAH’s meeting of the board of governors; there are many very important decisions to make during this month.

Pray for the young Swiss man named Jeremie who is preparing to come to Mahadaga for 11 months starting in September.

Pray for our preparations for home assignment – that we would end our term well and prepare everyone for our absence.

Pray for Florence’s language helper as she’s been sick with flare-ups from her sickle-cell disease and she’s nearing her third trimester of pregnancy.