

When there is no prayer

By Renata Machado Gandolfo

Translated by Miss. Antonivan Eusebio Pereira

She was sitting on the last bench in church, just beside the exit door. Her clothes did not look ironed; in fact they seemed worn out, torn, almost shabby. Her pointy bones were apparent under her clothes. Her eyes were turned to the floor, hazy, steady eyes. While the songs were sung, she nearly expressed something close to a smile. But she did not sing, she did not worship.

There was clearly distance between her mind and her body sitting on the church bench. But what was she thinking about?

At the end of the service she stood up, lonely. They barely noticed she was leaving. She snuck among people who talked loudly, laughed and greeted each other. Unnoticed, she left the worship hall with short, uncertain steps. She departed.

After this day the church became a little strange. Conversations were light; they flew above heads, dancing in the clouds. There was an air of happiness. The men believed in their own strength and power. The women dreamt of an independent life and believed they were free. But actually, they were all slaves to their own desires.

The joy was fleeting. Relationships became shallow—after all, the people could not reveal that anything was wrong. This was not expected of those who learned in the assembly. Time went by and no one missed the lady who had left unnoticed. A little after her departure the church grew almost lifeless.

It was a rainy, wet morning when Maria Clara dos Anjos, gloomy and apathetic, with her moldy soul, stepped into the church and remembered that lady. She realized that she had not seen her in church for a long time, nor had she heard anything of her in the service, nor in conversation with acquaintances, nor at family meals. Where could that lady be? Had she become so emaciated that she was unable to walk to church?

Maria Clara dos Anjos sat down. She slowly bowed her head, closed her eyes and quieted her thoughts. Then she noticed the lady's presence, Ms. Prayer, and Maria's thoughts rose to God. Ms. Prayer warmed Maria's heart, moved the waters, and the hurts drained out. The more Maria Clara stayed close to Ms. Prayer, the clearer her mind became and the more discernment she received. Maria Clara rejoiced in God, her Savior.

As Maria walked with her, Ms. Prayer began to gain weight.

The young woman, Maria Clara, told her friend and sister what had happened in her life since she rediscovered Ms. Prayer. Her friends wanted to meet Ms. Prayer, too. Together they started a mysterious journey into their souls, cultivating, planting. They started by pulling out the weeds that suffocate forgiveness to death. They plowed, with Ms. Prayer's help, their heart's ground. They planted the incorruptible seed of God's Word, and then harvest time came, bringing fruit, delicious fruit.

Ms. Prayer was no longer sitting at the back of the church, unnoticed. On the contrary, now the whole congregation heard about her. Everyone wanted to spend time with her because they had tasted her juicy fruit—a colorful, aromatic basket with fruit of righteousness, peace, patience, worship, service, forgiveness. These were the good fruits which Ms. Prayer had cultivated.

She started to participate again at meal tables in families' homes. Ms. Prayer made praises overflow in the congregations' singing. She changed her torn clothes into new garments, gained weight and actively participated in church life in the morning, afternoon and at night. Whenever there was a church member, she was with him or her. Where there was work, there she was laboring. Ms. Prayer was tireless, exhaling the good fruit of her fruits.

But Ms. Prayer surprised them when she taught the community to fight: "I'm going in front of you!" she said. And, along with Ms. Prayer, doors were opened, reinforcements were found, and with her came the whole heavenly army with trumpets, banners and the General.

Ms. Prayer had changed the life of the church.



Renata Machado Gandolfo is a writer for [Ministério Fiel](#), where she writes for its blog, "[Voltamos ao Evangelho](#)" (Returning to the Gospel). She also cultivates other female contributors to the blog. Renata has written multiple [articles](#) for Brazilian Christian woman on marriage, homosexuality, infertility, counseling, motherhood, depression and more. She speaks at women's conferences to nurture their faith ([see this video](#)). At LittWorld, she would like to gain more writing skills

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