

Kathu Prayer Watch

HOW DID YOUR PRAYER WATCH START?

The story of the Kathu prayer watch starts with an all-night prayer meeting at a local congregation in 1996. We simply carried on praying for the following two years, every Saturday night, starting at three o'clock in the morning till dawn. God encouraged us to keep on praying. When we heard about a promise that revival was to start from the southern point of South Africa and progress through the whole of Africa, we started praying with new fervour – we were not going to miss out on anything. At that stage we had never even heard of a prayer watch. We asked people to join us in prayer, but we made one mistake, we chose a time that would suit others. And so it happened that over the years we were arranging prayer meetings more or less at all times of the day and night. Yet it never suited everybody, because the people who say they want to pray and those who actually pray, are two different stories.

At that stage about 2 –12 people prayed together every Friday night. The Lord made known to us Kathu's gifts and creation purpose and the people prayed these Scriptures faithfully. In May 2002 the official opening of the Kathu prayer watch took place. People prayed at their homes during May 2003 and 2004. Towns in the vicinity started joining in, praying together in a 24-hour prayer watch. Every town had its own prayer coordinator who organised prayer in that town. Actually there were five organisers and each town then had a 24/7 prayer watch every fifth week for those seven days. In September 2004 we started praying in a flat in a neighbourhood in Kathu. It was a big step for people to now shift from 'praying at my home' to 'praying at a central place'. As from January 2007, 11 years later, the prayer watch in Kathu started praying day and night. The towns in our vicinity now pray in a cycle of four weeks, which means that each town has the opportunity once a month to organise a 24/7 prayer watch for seven days. We trust the Lord for another prayer coordinator in Postmasburg. There are still groups that pray weekly or monthly in other smaller towns like Dingleton, Olifantshoek and Hotazel.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

People often ask us if we are happy now that our dream has come true, that people are praying 24/7. This is when I realise we never really had this dream; we just looked for people to pray. But a place where we pray day and night – I never dreamt about such a place. Actually I'm not really one for dreams, if you know the Lord says pray, then you pray, and that's that. Where it goes from there is the Lord's plan and not ours. So, we do not really have many dreams for the future. We plan to carry on praying and asking people to pray with us. The one thing we did right, by the grace of God, was to ask people to pray, and also to keep on praying ourselves.

HOW DO YOU ORGANISE 24/7?

At present we are four organisers in Kathu and each of us organises one week of 24/7 prayer. We pray for three weeks and week four we have a Word watch and then we just read the Bible. Immediately after week four we start with week one again. During the course of each week approximately 30 people pray. So, we have about 120 people per month who attend the prayer watch. Those who pray are from different denominations and race groups, men, women and young people. The day and night prayer needed a lot of attention and work, so that last year we didn't reach out to other towns at all. Today the prayer watch is more independent and we will have more time to reach out to our friends in the rest of our area, and if possible also the Northern Cape.

DO YOU SEE YOUR PRAYERS BEARING FRUIT?

Kathu is one of the most prosperous towns in SA with regard to finances, racial integration and low crime rate. A newspaper report in the *Volksblad* newspaper last year placed Kathu 2nd on the list of 10 municipal regions where people would like to live. The other eight areas were all in the Western Cape, only Kathu was in a different province. Apart from this, I believe that the most important fruits of the prayer watch can be found in the personal lives of the people who go there to pray. People are busy learning a lifestyle of prayer; almost all who pray there

testify that they experience a distinct presence of the Lord there. No one who comes out is the same person who went in, and this is how the Lord is going to change our country. One person at a time, one person who enters into His presence in a prayer watch, one person who realises that Elijah was human just like you and me, but just look at the power of his prayer. One person at a time who is filled by God with Hope and Glory. If we still believe that God is going to transform our country, it will only happen by your prayers and mine. Because it is in His presence that He changes me, and he changes the people I ask to pray, because I cannot. The more people we can involve in our prayer watches, the more God is able to bring change in our country, and this is the way it is going to happen: Transformation for South Africa and Africa comes through only one person at a time that takes part in a prayer watch and is changed there by God.

WHAT TIPS CAN YOU GIVE OTHERS ON STARTING A PRAYER WATCH, OR WHO MIGHT BE STRUGGLING?

My advice to people who want to start a new prayer watch would be that they should pray in a prayer watch from the word go, that is if it is to be an interdenominational watch, but just start doing something. Don't wait for others. Don't expect your preacher or pastor to do it, but don't exclude them in the process. DO NOT DO IT ALONE, get a prayer partner to help you. Do what you think will work in your situation. Be willing to start on a small scale. In time God will give you directions Himself about the specific needs of your town. Commit yourself to making a difference in your town, stop inviting other 'smart' people to come and pray there for this or that, you are the smart one who lives there and you are the one who must make a difference there. Just don't stop praying, keep at it!

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY, DID YOU DO WRONG?

We thought it would become easier, and it didn't. We thought that given time, people would want to pray themselves later on, and it still hasn't happened. You must organise all the time, a prayer watch needs to be organised by someone.

A LAST WORD?

I am Elzana, and I'm involved in teaching fulltime. Ronél is involved in helping with the prayer watch fulltime. We both believe that God can make a difference even if it doesn't always look like it.

(Contact: Elzana Buckle at 072 434 4695 and Ronél van Vuuren at 082 960 1790, e-mail: elzanab@telkomsa.net).