

The Parable of the Firefighters

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An urgent call came into 911, a terrible fire had broken out in a hotel in the heart of the city. The lazy 911 operator took a long draw on the rest of her tall mocha latte and thumbed through a list of telephone numbers and finally dialed the city Newspaper desk.

“People will want to know about the fire,” she thought. “Who better to tell them about it than the newspaper.” The editor was excited to get the call and immediately sent out a crack team of reporters to the hotel where the fire was reported. The crack team of reporters did a nice job of describing in their note the billows of black smoke and tall flames coming from the hotel but did nothing to help the people screaming for help from within the building.

Again, an urgent call came into 911 that a the fire had spread from the hotel to a large department store. The lazy 911 operator was very busy at the time finishing the last coat of shiny polish on her long fingernails and was not happy about potentially ruining her artwork by pushing more buttons. But because the person on the other end was so frantic, she once again thumbed through her list of contacts and decided to dial the city pound because inevitably, there would be frightened dogs and cats fleeing the fire. Besides, the number was all 3s so dialing would not mess up her freshly painted nails.

The Dog Catcher arrived at the fire and sure enough there were strays everywhere but he was too busy catching dogs and cats to notice the cries for help coming from the burning buildings.

Finally, the man who made the first two calls to 911 became so exasperated when he saw the dog catcher show up as the fire spread from the department store to the bank he decided to do the only thing he could think of to do. He ran the 10 blocks to the local 33rd Ladder 9 fire station. Immediately, the fire chief sounded the alarm and the firefighters sprang into action.

With choreographed precision they all put on their protective gear, boots, gloves pants, jacket and helmet and climbed into their place on the large tanker truck. The giant garage door rolled up, the lights flashed, the siren rang and the fire truck sped toward the massive fire.

Upon arriving the training of the firefighters was evident. Each had a pre-assigned task but they were all coordinated together to save lives and do everything to put out the fire and prevent it from spreading. Some firefighters hooked the large hoses to the fire hydrants and began spraying the fire with water.

Others, took axes and entered the bottom floor of the buildings looking for people who might still be trapped inside. While others, used the tall ladders to reach the top floors. Still others, set up barricades to prevent the crack team of reporters, the dog catcher and everyone else looking on from getting too close.

Firefighters of Intercessory Prayer

A panicked scream for help came from a high window which was unreachable by the tall ladder. Black smoke billowed out of the opening as a young mother and two children made their way out on the dangerous ledge. The reporters and dog catcher froze as the unthinkable was suddenly imaginable. Seeing the young family, the fire chief shouted the command, "lifenet!" and all the fire fighters who were not manning a water nozzle dropped what they were doing and sprinted to the building and gathered below the window. A large round trampoline-like fabric was unfolded as the fire firefighters surrounded the simple but effective lifenet.

"Madam, take your youngest child and drop her feet first. Do not worry, we will catch her. Do it now." The frantic mother could never have imagined that she would ever drop her child from a tall building into the hands of strangers. It was unthinkable just a few minutes ago. But now, she had no choice. Without thinking, she kissed the little girl on the head, held her out over the ledge and let go.

With a single motion the fire fighters softly caught the toddler in the lifenet. One of the rescuers reached in and carefully pulled the terrified child into her arms and quickly made her way to the paramedic.

"Now the next child. Please hurry, madam." the Fire Chief shouted over the megaphone. The boy clung to his mother with his face buried in her side. "Son, you cannot stay there. You have to jump. We will catch you!"

"I can't do it, mommy. I'm scared, I'm really, really..." An explosion of fire blew out the window right next to where they were standing. The fire fighters all shielded themselves from the shower of glass raining down. The boy gripped his mother even tighter. The heat from the fire was unbearably hot but they were both frozen on the ledge."

"Madam," shouted the chief, "jump together. Hold the boy's hand. You have to jump now, we'll catch you!" The mother pried the boys arm from around her legs and grabbed his hand. "They will catch us, Honey. Come on, jump!" Without a second thought, the woman and boy leaped from the ledge. The brave firefighters braced themselves.

It was a perfect landing. The lifenet was slowly lowered to the ground and soon the family was reunited at the paramedics ambulance. Miraculously, they were all saved.

Throughout the rest of the day and night, the brave firefighters did their job, putting out the fire and preventing it from spreading to other buildings. Their first objective was always saving people in danger and when it was necessary, preventing the reporters and dog catcher from getting in the way of doing the firefighters job.

People who pray for other people are like brave firefighters.

Firefighters of Intercessory Prayer

People who pray for others:

- respond to spiritual alarms quickly and without hesitation.
- put on the whole armor of God so that they can stand firm against the fires they are sure to face.
- hurry to the danger zone with courage, order, training, and teamwork.
- apply spiritual gifts to accomplish the mission.
- unite in prayer to provide a lifenet.
- stand in the gap so that good can be protected, evil can be extinguished and people can be saved.