

## **Giving Thanks**

### **By Stephanie Wolfe**

Thanksgiving is a great time of the year. Many of our families think of us and tell us how much they appreciate what we've done for them throughout the year. Much of what we do isn't very visible, like building them a house, planting them a garden, or sewing them clothes, so often it's hard to see just what we have accomplished over the year. I'm grateful that they remember us and it feels good to be reminded that what we do has value.

I'm sure your ministry is much like ours, and throughout the course of the year we have counseled troubled teens, brought reconciliation to marriages in distress, and financially assisted families in crisis. We have helped people to see the value of their lives, when they thought there was none; given people hope when they had lost theirs; urged them to look at the positive when their focus was fixed on the negative. We have preformed weeks of premarital counseling, taught weeks of "Intimacy Classes"; held birthday parties, Valentines parties, Christmas parties and going-away parties. We have attended untold numbers of baby showers, and bridal showers. We have married couples, dedicated babies, baptized new believers, and held more funerals than we wanted to. We have taught classes, preached sermons, lead leaders, and loved people. Even the unlovely!

We forgave the hurts, overcame the obstacles, jumped the hurdles, blew past roadblocks and grew in spite of Satan's efforts to thwart our progress. We've made difficult decisions. We've studied, prayed, fasted, tithed, and stretched 'till our heads and body hurt. We've overlooked the needs of our family at times to meet the needs of another, and though overwhelmed with current responsibility took on more in the areas where there seemed to be a lack. We've prayed with people to receive Christ, prayed for people to be healed, and prayed for marriages to be restored. We've prayed for jobs, houses, cars, and roommates. We've prayed for unsaved husbands and parents, and for prodigal sons and daughters. At times we've seen our prayers answered and at times we've watched God carry his child through the difficulty in ways that only He can.

We've been humbled, embarrassed, distressed, fearful, cautious, nauseous, and at times scared to death! We've felt alone, depressed, misunderstood, and intentionally abused, but we have also felt loved, lifted up, believed in, encouraged and appreciated.

We are among the busiest people on the face of the earth and no matter how hard they try no one can understand this truth like another ministry family. I'm not complaining, or asking you to join me for a pity party, (I don't attend pity parties. They're against my religion.) I'm merely stating a fact. We're human, and like every other human being alive, we have needs, but unlike every other human being alive, we have the needs of hundreds of others to consider also. What a responsibility! But what a joy! To be chosen of God to carry burdens with another, to help them to escape from the darkness into The Light and to build up what the enemy tries so very hard to tear down!

You are an awesome woman of God and a gift to the body of Christ! Take a moment and think back on this year. You and God have accomplished a lot! It's like the story of the lady working in her garden when a passerby approached her saying, "What a beautiful garden you and God have created." To which the lady replied, "Yes, but you should have seen it when God had it all by Himself." God and His ministry couples make a great team!

This year when your folks send you thanksgiving cards, or tell you how thankful they are for you, accept it and remember that without Christ we can do nothing, but with Him all things are possible! The garden that you're planting is worth all the time and attention you've given to it, and though your work may not be as visible as a house, a garden, or some new clothes remember you are building lives, pruning, watering, and fertilizing gardens and making sure that your people are clothed in righteousness! I'd take that kind of spiritual work over the real "dirty work" any day! Amen?

I Understand,

## *Stephanie Wolfe*

Stephanie Wolfe is the author of *Mentoring Women* a 12-month resource for churches to develop women in the area of spiritual maturity and character development. She is the author of *Ahhh, the Ministry!* – For pastors' wives, from a pastor's wife who understands pastors' wives. For more information concerning her numerous women's resources or to contact her to speak for your next conference visit her website [www.innerbeauties.com](http://www.innerbeauties.com) or call 678.714.7008.