

God Protects Family of 6 in Mississippi Bathtub

How many family members can you fit into a bathtub?

When a tornado bore down on Hattiesburg, Miss., earlier this week, one family found the answer to that very quickly.

Six.

As it became apparent the 170-mph twister, measuring three-fourths of a mile wide, was headed for their house in Petal—the adjacent city to Hattiesburg—the entire family headed for the tub.

First, the 15-year-old son, Bible in hand, jumped in and lay on the bathtub's floor. Next, the two daughters, ages 8 and 12, climbed on their brother. Dad and grandmother followed, filling in the gaps to provide a hedge of protection.

Five family members had crowded in. Only mom was left.

"She was deeply concerned that her family was all going to die," said Pat Geyer, chaplain coordinator for the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team. "She had just enough time to jump on top of all of them, spreading her arms to protect them."

If that wasn't heroic enough, the mother, terrified of the awful noise intensifying from the winds outside—"far louder than a passing train"—decided to pray at the top of her lungs.

"She screamed at the top of her lungs The Lord's Prayer," Geyer said. "So that what they heard was the prayer to the Lord, not the deafening sound from the tornado."

"OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME!!!"

"The noise was so intense, she didn't want her children to

focus on the sound,” Geyer said. “When the prayer was done, the noise had passed and not one of them was hurt. Not even a scratch.”

Meanwhile, the brick house across the street? Destroyed.

The windows in the cars parked out front? Shattered.

“There were huge enormous things that were blown into their yard—an incredible mass of stuff,” Geyer said. “But in that house they are convinced it was the hand of God who protected them. There’s a profound faith in that family, but they are still traumatized.”

That’s where a seasoned chaplain and counselor like Geyer comes in. Trained in more than a dozen crisis management areas, Geyer was able to encourage the family spiritually.

“You could feel the Holy Spirit when you walked onto that property,” Geyer said. “I knew there was something unique about this family.”

Geyer is one of two chaplains currently ministering in the Hattiesburg area, where at least 800 homes were destroyed, and possibly a lot more once the final tallies come in. Four more chaplains are scheduled to arrive Sunday, to share the hope and love of Christ to the storm survivors.

“This (deployment) is much larger than we had originally thought,” Geyer said. “People who live here are overwhelmed when they see the damage.”

One hardware store was completely annihilated, with debris from the store found several blocks away. Yet many areas along the storm’s path were left untouched.

“The tornado lifted, then it would come back down, then jump back up,” Geyer said. “It would go almost exactly two blocks and come back down.”

On Wednesday, President Obama declared Hattiesburg a federal disaster area.

“People would look outside and across the street and think, it wasn’t that bad. But then they go to the next block and it’s horrible. Trees down. Homes destroyed. Telephone wires down. They’re just starting to get utilities back up.”

Continue to pray for Hattiesburg, Miss., as well as for the Rapid Response Team chaplains who have just finished up deployments in Calhoun, Ga. (tornado), Nassau County, N.Y. (Hurricane Sandy) and Newtown, Conn., in January. [Click here](#) to support the crisis-trained BGEA chaplains.

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