

Silent Saints of the Church

In Remembrance of
Nell Grace Doverspike
November 30, 1925 – June 27, 2007

By William F. Doverspike, Jr.

Preachers' wives are the silent saints of the church. Nell Grace Doverspike was such a woman, who supported her husband's ministry for over 55 years before she joined him in Heaven on June 27, 2007.

I spend much of my day in prayer yet I did not learn about prayer from my father—the minister—so much as I learned about it from my mother—the missionary. She had gone to college to study to become a missionary, yet by the time of her graduation she had literally sacrificed her whole career plan so that she could support the ministry of another and so that she could have children. It is ironic that in doing so, in sacrificing her own life for the lives of others, she created a mission field of her own.

Nell Doverspike was a simple woman. She was also the most self-sacrificial person I have ever known. It is a testament to her faith that by her example she raised her six children to devote their lives to serving others. It is an even greater legacy to her faith that she has 12 grandchildren, several of whom have become the next generation of missionaries. As she often reminded us, "God is not done with you yet."

So I did not learn about prayer from my father—the minister—but from my mother—the missionary. I had heard my father's booming voice of prayer from the church pulpit every Sunday morning---and at the dinner table each evening---but it was in the quiet hours of the night that I heard our mother's loving prayers beside each of her children's bedsides at night.

It always seemed a bit peculiar to me that although my father was the theologian in the family, it was my mother who taught me the most about God. I remember struggling through an atheistic semester in college when a silent vision of my mother slowly guided me back toward God. It was not anything that she said, but simply a silent image of her getting up an hour before sunrise so that she could cook my breakfast before my paper route, or before morning athletic practice, or before I went to the hospital to begin work before dawn. It was not anything that she said, but simply the silent image of her praying at our bedsides each night. If she had been praying to nothing at all, then what strange force could have been so powerful to motivate the unconditional and unending love that I saw in her each day? It was a love that she lived each day.

It was during an afternoon motorcycle ride after a theology class in college that I remembered, "God is love." If God is love, as I had heard her read the Bible verse when I was a child, then I had already experienced God in my own life---because I had experienced love---the unconditional love that was shown to me by my mother---the self-sacrificial love that was continually given to me by my mother---the eternal love that transcends time, and distance, and even death.

Sometimes I wonder, do I live my life in a way that reflects God's love to others?

William F. Doverspike, Jr.
A Preacher's Kid

References

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