

a career. She never saw it quite that way. She was preoccupied with the immediate ministry in which she found herself, raising two boys and serving as her husband's soul mate, confidante, sounding board, cheerleader, benevolent critic, friend for life, and encourager.

Servant ministry was at the core of her being. My brother and I were more than once censured for invading a yield of warm cookies destined for the sick and aged in local nursing homes. In one such establishment, she was one of the very few "regulars" who attended to people who rarely if ever had a visitor, even from their own family. Some of my earliest memories are of ac-

and deep compassion. There were not a few kids "with problems" who caught her attention and received her special tenderness. Certain kids were seen as behavioral challenges (a euphemism for "holy terrors"), but always my mom found a place in her heart for them. Her maternal instincts cast themselves broadly and widely. She delighted in the simple rituals of teaching memory verses or Bible songs and laying the early groundwork for lifelong Christian discipleship.

To say that Mom was simple or uncomplicated as a servant minister alongside my dad is *not* to say that she lacked depth. She was a theologian in her own right, wise in the

of God, is a special object of God's dignifying grace and therefore a worthy object of our Christian affection.

On one occasion, when my brother and I were quite young and my dad was out of town, there was a knock on our door in the middle of the night. Other mothers might have panicked. Mom peeped out the window and saw the familiar but troubled face of a man from our neighborhood who was down on his luck and stone drunk.

He sat down on our front porch, and Mom, rather than turning him away, began to console him through the window screen. That dark night he poured out his troubles to her, after which she prayed with him and sent him on his way. Once sober again, he was apologetic but also deeply grateful.

Strong and Stabilizing

My brother and I over the years came to refer to Mom as the "soft rock" to whom we, like so many others in and out of the church, could turn for her strong faith and stabilizing wisdom. Her spiritual antennae were always primed and ready as she nurtured us and so many others in the demonstrated fruits of the Spirit.

My Mom had no interest in "competing" with my Dad in the spotlight of his ministry. She was thoroughly comfortable with being an anchor behind the scenes. In doing so, however, she commanded not only great respect but a truly authoritative witness for those who trusted her judgment and wanted to emulate her Christian virtues.

She reached out so very often to the "little people," the "salt of the earth" kind of folks who did not draw attention to themselves and who might have been passed over by some. Lonely widows, likely to be left

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companying her on her missions of mercy and watching wrinkled faces light up when she entered the room.

In her own home, she gracefully and effortlessly modeled Christian hospitality. We seemed to have a parade of diverse people—from around the corner and all over the world—as guests at our table. Great and festive meals were often produced with little advance warning in order to host someone who, perhaps once a stranger, quickly became a dear friend through table fellowship. Mom both warmed, and was warmed by, those who enjoyed her spectacular meals on Lord's day afternoons.

For 45 years Mom was the superintendent of the Primary department (grades 1-3) in Sunday school, to which she devoted enormous energy

ways of the Christian life through her own experiences of suffering and her disciplined personal habits of prayer and meditation on the Scriptures.

Our family was graced in the early 1960s by the brief life of a little sister with Down syndrome. Melinda Ann lived only nine months, in which my mom, torn by grief and often bathing little "Mindy" in her tears, never lost a beat in upholding her family and serving others in the church.

That experience bore much fruit in later years, as Mom and Dad were able to minister to many families who had tasted the joys and sorrows of having a child with mental retardation. Mom resonated my Dad's frequent statement that "God doesn't make any junk," that every human being, created in the image

Blowers: Friend and Fellow Servant

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out of holiday celebrations, were quite often guests at our Thanksgiving table or at our Christmas Eve gatherings of family and friends.

My teenage daughter recently wrote an essay published in our local newspaper in which she held up her grandma as her model and mentor. Leslie reflects on how her Grandma's hands—now revealing the crippling effects of Alzheimer's disease—bespeak a life of Christian servanthood:

Gnarled by age and stiffened by strokes, the hands rest one across the other atop the petite woman's chest. Fingers worn by years of hard work remain tightly clenched into two small fists, rarely opened until gently pried apart as the woman sleeps. Rosy red polish decorates the smooth nails,

meticulously painted there by a visiting granddaughter. Tissue paper-thin skin stretches delicately across the silent hands. Tiny brown age spots dance around the raised maze of blue veins. A tarnished gold band dotted by a simple diamond sits confidently upon her finger. These hands have seen life and all it has to offer. These hands are my grandma's. . . .

. . . I look at my hands—strong, able, and willing to work. My goal for myself becomes striving to discover what these hands can do. The impurities on my grandma's hands are perfected by the legacy she has left behind and the imprint she has made on others' lives. . . . *

All who have come to know this woman, Marian Blowers, especially her husband, will testify to a life of gentleness, grace, compassion, wisdom, strength, and especially now, courage. Disease may have seized

her memory, but it can never seize the spirit of one who so long ago became a captive of the love of Jesus Christ, and who poured forth that love to countless saints and sinners alike.

If her role as a preacher's wife appears "traditional," let that description imply not a quaint or old-fashioned image of submissiveness, but the fact that she has handed on a well-tested *tradition*, a living legacy of faith, commitment, and the kind of Christian character of which the church is made.

Elizabethton (Tennessee) Star, 19 November 2003.

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