

life of the larger community. Sometimes fathers and other men can also serve as nurturers and caregivers for children and others. We celebrate all who have taken the time and responsibility to raise our children—especially our mothers.

My mother became a Christian at the First Baptist Church of Boston when she came to America in 1947. She always said to me in Chinese, "When it is God's will, it will be okay." (Facing tremendous family trials herself, she always would say, "When it is God's will, it

will be okay.") When I was considering my call to full-time Christian ministry, she would remind me that it is God's will and whatever God wants us to do, it is for our very best. What trust the faithfulness! I praise God for the honor and trust that my mother had for God's will. I honor my mother for her trust in God.

"A woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates." (Proverbs 31:30~31). ❧

## CENTER GRAVITY Evelyn O. Shih

Second Sister is 88 years old. Last year, in 1998, all of her five children traveled to Singapore to celebrate her birthday. I was also there to praise the Lord with them.

Second Sister is actually my sister-in-law, yet we have a mother-daughter relationship. She took full care of me after the birth of each child. I had four babies in five years and each time a new baby was born she would bring her two little ones and move into our home for a month. I blamed her for my ever-increasing weight, but I believe, just as every Chinese person believes, that a woman's health depends mainly on the availability of good nutrition and rest after childbirth. Second Sister provided me with all that.

As an 88-year-old person, Second Sister is quite healthy. She still has a good memory and keen mind. Only her legs are weak and her eyesight has dimmed. She needs to be helped when she is out of the house and you can be sure that she has more helpers than she needs. All her children and grandchildren want to be close to her and be her main helper.

During my visit, I discovered that the children and grandchildren are not surrounding

a helpless old woman; rather, they truly depend upon her. Second Sister is the center of gravity, the core and the anchor of the clan.

Every Sunday evening when the four generations get together for a family meal, they love to hear Grandma say grace in her Hokkien dialect. They all feel blessed with peace and joy just as the Israelites felt when they heard the blessings of Abraham, Moses and other chieftains.

Second Sister's family members also go to her for intercession when they experience troubles or sickness. Grandma is not afraid of bad news, nor will she be nervous or "worry to death" as is the habit of many grandmothers. She merely hands over all the bad news to the Lord and asks for His mercy and guidance. Even the friends of her grandchildren will come to request Grandma's prayers when they have problems.

Perhaps the wisdom of this story is that a nagging mother will chase her family away. Only a praying mother will gather her children around her. The mother, as the center of gravity, exudes love and prayers which bless the entire family, from generation to generation! ❧