
To Be Like My Mother

Susan Shen

I believe that nine out of ten people will say that they have the greatest mother. I too, would be included in those nine. However, I would also say that I have the greatest mother not only for what she had done for her family, but also for others outside her family.

As a wife and a mother, there is no doubt that she has given the best of her for her family. Five years after their marriage, my father received a scholarship which enabled him to study in USA. However, that scholarship was only for his tuition fee and he didn't have enough money to bring his wife and two daughters with him. So, for the next two years my mother had to bring up two young children and also took over my father's duty as a church minister. I think most women would not accept to be left by herself and having such a great responsibility. In their parting too, she didn't burden my father with tearful farewell, not because she didn't feel sad (as she later told him in a letter), but because she didn't want to make it harder for him to depart. Such is the courage she taught us as we

grew older, not by words but by example.

As a minister's wife, she also cared for those outside her immediate family circle. Not superficially, but sincerely. Recently, a church member called and expressed her anxiety for her brother. She told us that the house next door to her brother's shop was on fire. Most people would say some words of comforts or encouragement, some would offer support in prayer, only a few would actually pray. After my mother got off the phone, she went into her room and stayed there to pray. For the next hour or so, she alternately pray and seek information about the fire, and didn't stop praying until she received words that the fire was out and the shop was saved.

All these qualities of my mother I have always knew, but it was only recently that I understood the strength that enable her to have such qualities was her close relationship to God. Because of her examples, now I also seek to be closer to God, everyday, so that one day, I too will be like my mother. ❄

Mother's Day

Donald Ng

(Senior Pastor of First Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco)

One undeniable fact is that we all have mothers. Without their special gifts to bring new life into the world, we would not exist. Mothers come in all different brands. Some may have had more difficulties than others in fulfilling their responsibilities as mothers, but all of them cared enough to nurture and love, to bring about the next generation.

On Mother's Day we celebrate and honor all the mothers in our midst and in the world.

In Proverbs 31:30 we read that when a woman or mother honors or gives reverence to God, she is to be praised. We recognize how important mothers are in sharing Bible stories with their children, in giving moral guidance in hard situations, in providing food for nourishment, and in showering forgiving love in times of hurting and loneliness. The role of being a mother can also be seen in single and older women accepting these responsibilities for the

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! ❧