

A Life of Devotion

Last Tuesday and Thursday, Toni and I had the opportunity to visit for a while with our dear Sister Edith Tountas. Sitting in her room just off the kitchen, I also remembered having visited many times (not as many as I should have) with both James and Edith after James got so ill. But then I also recall the really good times when many of us would be invited and go over to the Tountas house for fellowship. With the house sold and Edith moving to Bryan/College Station this week, all Toni and I and a lot of us have are memories.

Edith devoted herself to the Lord, serving Him in any capacity she could. It was devotion to Him that caused her to be the wonderful Christian woman she was. She was (and is) a huge example of what God expects out of each and every one of us. Funny to use the word “huge” in describing Edith, since she is such a diminutive lady. Still, you know what they say about dynamite—even though it can come in a small package, it still packs quite a punch. That could have been said for my mother, who was 5 foot nothing and 87 pounds the day she passed away, and it most certainly can be said about Edith.

It seems few of us really know the strength Edith has, given her small stature. Let me tell you that I know that she is a great deal stronger than anyone would ever suspect. Being married to James all of the years she was helped her to develop the strength she needed. As an elder’s wife, she suffered greatly with decisions James had to make. Although she told me that he seldom spoke with her about them, it was obvious the strain he faced was hers as well. Being a Christian in today’s world is difficult enough, but being the wife of a shepherd of the church places a person under great scrutiny. Timothy is told by Paul in **I Timothy 3:11** that the women (wives of elders or deacons) **“must be worthy of respect and serious, not gossipers, but temperate and self-controlled, [thoroughly] trustworthy in all things.”** I’ve never seen anything other than that in Edith in all the years I have known her.

Edith showed her devotion to God throughout her years not only by supporting and assisting her husband in his service as an elder and faithfully attending and participating in the worship services, but by being a Christian wife and mother. She understands that her life (all of it) is service to God and that includes not only her spiritual family, but her earthly family as well. She submitted to James’ authority in her household, and remained by his side through the good times as well as the difficult times. The last few years of James’ life was difficult, but Edith took care of him as best she could. To lose him and a son within a few weeks of each other was extremely stressful, but with the help of her church family and her son, daughter-in-law, and extended family, she made it through. It can be said she was devoted to both James and Jim until the day they left us. And she remains devoted to Bob and his family as she begins her life near them.

On a personal note (and I mentioned this Sunday morning as many of us said our goodbyes) there have been only a few women in my life that I can truly say have meant

the world to me. I said that they included my next door neighbor, who was much like a second mother to me, my mother, my grandmother and my wife, all whom I dearly love and I believe have had a great deal to do with me being the person that I am. I also added to that list Edith Tountas, the wife of my elder, the mother of my brothers in Christ, and an example to my wife and me (and MANY others) of what it means to be a Christian woman in a world where more are desperately needed.

This may sound a bit like a eulogy—believe me it isn't. Edith has a lot more devotion to give and a brand new "field" in which to work. All of us pray for her continued good health and a renewed strength for the challenges ahead. We love you, Edith.