

Children's Statements upon the Passing of Ruth Bell Graham

Gigi Graham, Eldest daughter

"Mother stood waiting outside the doorway...We would back away and watch as Daddy took Mother in his arms, kissing her warmly and firmly, knowing it would be some time before he would hold her again.

"Then Daddy was whisked away in the car, around the curves and down the steep mountain drive. We listened to the retreating sound of the engine and waited for the final "toot" of the horn as he reached the gate. Another plane to catch, another city, another Crusade, another period of weeks before we would be together as a family once more.

"I turned to look at Mother, sensing her feeling of loss and loneliness. Her eyes were bright with unshed tears, but there was a beautiful smile on her face as she said, "OK, let's clean the attic! Then we'll have Lao Niang and Lao I up for supper!" (That's Chinese for maternal grandmother and grandfather.)

"Not once did my mother make us feel that by staying behind she was sacrificing her life for us children. By her sweet, positive example, her consistently unselfish spirit, and her total reliance upon the Person of Jesus Christ, we were kept from becoming bitter or resentful. Instead, we learned to look for ways to keep busy and prepare for Daddy's homecoming."

Anne Graham Lotz, second daughter

"I would go down to my mother's room early in the morning. Her light would be on, and I would find her at her big, flat-top desk. She would be reading and studying her Bible, with about 14 different translations spread out around her.

"When I would go down to her room late at night, I would see the light on underneath the door and I'd go in, and she would be on her knees in prayer.

"As I look back on my childhood, I cannot remember any impression whatsoever that my mother was ever lonely. She may have been lonely, but I never saw it.

"I believe that our heavenly Father, our Savior, saved my mother from loneliness because of her daily walk with the Lord Jesus, He was the love of her life. I saw that in her life. It was her love for the Lord Jesus, with whom she walks every day, that made me want to love Him and walk with Him like that."

Ruth Graham, namesake daughter

"I cannot recall my earliest memory of my mother, but I am quite sure it is associated with joy. I now understand that her joy did not stem from perfect or ideal circumstances, but from a deep, abiding love affair with the Lord Jesus.

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"Life was not easy for mother. With five children to raise; a home to run; a husband rarely at home and usually far away; and the world watching for any flaws and expecting her to be perfect, she experienced her share of sorrows, burdens, injustice, confusion, pressure, and hurt. However, I would not say I ever saw mother display anger or doubt

"Mother's parents exercised a profound effect upon the development of her character and laid the foundations for who she was. What she witnessed in her family home, she practiced for herself – dependence on God in every circumstance, love for His Word, concern for others above self and an indomitable spirit – displayed with a smile. For her, self-sacrifice was a way of life.

"How does one live with one of the world's most famous men? God prepared my mother for this position years ago in China. Although she was never 'trained' for her role, Mother maintained her perspective and had the heart of an evangelist.

"Though often her gift was overshadowed by that of my father's, hers was exercised more effectively on behalf of individuals. At her deepest core was the desire for individuals to know Christ in a personal and intimate way. My mother talked to individuals, loving them one-by-one, showing her love and concern for them as people.

"It was far from easy. But she had a tender and yielded heart. Her happiness and fulfillment did not depend on her circumstances. She was a lovely, beautiful and wise woman because early in life, she made Christ her home, her purpose, her center, her confidant and her vision."

Franklin Graham, eldest son

"My mama loved the scriptures, she was a student of the scriptures, but she also had a great sense of humor. She loved to play jokes on people and she played them on daddy, she played them on daddy's staff, and she always, right up until the day she went to heaven, had a twinkle in her eye—a mischievous twinkle that was almost like she was sitting there thinking about what she could do to get one up on you. Mama was just always a lot of fun."

"For my mother, right was right and wrong was wrong, she never compromised on anything. She stood strong for what was biblically correct and accurate. She would help my father prepare his messages, listening with an attentive ear, and if she saw something that wasn't right or heard something that she felt wasn't as strong as it could be, she was a voice to strengthen this or eliminate that. Every person needs that kind of input in their life and she was that to my father. My father would not have been what he is today if it wasn't for my mother. Ruth Graham was that rock in my father's life."

Ned Graham, youngest son

"That mountain home was Mother's nest. Back in her bedroom, she had her own study desk—a big, wide, flatboard table that she had gotten from an old mountain cabin and restored. She had it pushed up against the wall, and stacked on top were her study Bibles, commentaries and concordance. I can remember as a boy getting up early and going into her room, where she would be sipping coffee while quietly studying.

"As I grew older, my parents were pretty good about giving me liberty to come and go as I pleased. But my mother, like most mothers, had her own way of getting her point across. She always sat up and waited until I got home—no matter what time it was. It

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really bugged me, because it made me feel guilty. I don't know how many times I tried to slip in late. There she would be, dressed in her robe, sitting in her rocker with a book or a Bible on her lap. "Thank God you're all right," she'd say.

"You don't need to wait up for me," I'd say sheepishly. Mama would just smile, say goodnight and go to her room. As intent as I was on showing my independence and partying late if I wanted to, after awhile Mama's night watchman routine got to me, although these confrontations weren't mean or bitter.

Mother has always offered so much love and she always enjoys learning about something new."