

Bev's Eulogy – Elaine's notes

(though I spoke extemporaneously and my remarks were not the same)

Bev was a very important part of my life from my earliest memories. She was two years younger, and we have numerous pictures of the two of us in matching clothes, or out in the small Mexican village where my parents worked as Bible translators. We shared important moments in the growth of our faith, and the growth of our understanding of the world.

Like many sisters, I think we sometimes took one another for granted. But we always loved one another and got along well –I honestly do not remember conflict or mistrust– only the confidence that we loved one another and could share anything.

Through the years I appreciated letters, emails and phone conversations about our faith, and our personal and professional lives. Bev was a marriage and family therapist, so I appreciated her insights about situations I faced, and discussion on the workshops and talks she presented. I have great memories of spending time outdoors together whenever we were able to be together, including sailing, fishing, and trying out the activities in the book Tim wrote.

Perhaps one of the most important things I learned from Bev is a lesson that goes back many years and was reinforced a number of times. It is the fundamental and important truth that we are completely dependant on God. We are not masters of our own lives, and while we make the best choices we can, there is a great deal we don't control. We're constantly engaged in a dance with the unexpected. If we accept that, we can experience joy in life's gifts and peace in life's difficulties.

Bev nearly died when she was 18. When she recovered, we all knew it was a miracle. Then I was with Bev when she had her first test to see if she had cancer. I was completely bewildered how to cope with this or help her cope with it. But through the years, Bev taught us to see that no matter what circumstances God allows into our lives, He loves us and He is present with us. We were delighted when she was free of cancer for several years, when she survived many difficulties, or when tests returned negative.

But in this past year when it appeared she was engaged in her "last battle," the fact that she had truly learned the lessons of patience, trust, faith, and great love were truly evident. She gave us a wonderful demonstration of how to die gracefully. And so, while I'm sad I won't get to see my sister again here on earth, I'm glad for the faith our whole family shares, that we will see her in heaven.

The morning I got the call that she was semi-conscious, I had read Psalm 100:4 "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise." I had never thought of these verses as referring to entering heaven, but they seemed to apply to Bev at that moment.

The image of death as walking through a door into a much better world is one that had long been in my imagination and comforted me. Now that Bev has stepped through that door, I find myself looking through it with much greater anticipation.