

Dodie Osteen Celebration of Life Set for Friday: How She Touched Millions Through Faith and Healing

In a life shaped by faith, trials and unwavering love for people, Dodie Osteen became a spiritual mother to multitudes—yet she never set out to be in the spotlight. Now, as her upcoming celebration of life is set to take place on Friday, August 8, people around the globe are remembering her for her commitment to Christ and to others.

Born Dolores Ann Pilgrim in Baytown, Texas, Dodie was affectionately called “Dodie” from a young age. Her early years were marked by hardship—she contracted polio before her second birthday, a challenge that gave her a firsthand understanding of suffering and a deep sensitivity to the pain of others. That empathy would later define her ministry.

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Drawn to a life of helping people, Dodie pursued nursing. It was during this time that she met a young, passionate pastor named John Osteen. She initially thought he was simply checking in on church members, but later realized he was actually showing up just to see her. “I thought that man’s got a lot of sick people in his church,” she once joked. It wasn’t until Valentine’s Day of 1954 that she understood his visits were for her.

The two married, and began their ministry journey together. In 1959, the Osteens stepped out in faith to plant Lakewood Church, a decision that transformed not only their lives but the spiritual landscape of Houston and beyond.

Lakewood grew steadily under their leadership, eventually reaching a national audience through television and international missions. While John preached, Dodie quietly shaped the church's compassionate spirit through her presence, encouragement and especially her prayers.

But in 1981, their journey took a harrowing turn. Dodie was diagnosed with metastatic cancer of the liver and given a grim prognosis. Rather than succumb to fear, she turned fully to the Word of God—writing down Scriptures, declaring healing and even signing a covenant with God while riding in the car one day. “I signed my name and he signed his. And then I said, ‘I don’t think Jesus will mind if I sign His name,’” she recalled.

In time, her body began to heal. Doctors marveled at her recovery, and soon she began praying for others who were sick. Her testimony sparked a new season of ministry—one defined by healing prayer, compassion and childlike faith in a God who is still in the miracle-working business.

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When John passed away in 1999, Dodie remained the spiritual core of Lakewood Church. She stood faithfully beside her son Joel Osteen, who was named the new senior pastor, and continued ministering in her signature way—one person at a time, with a prayer and a hug.

Her life wasn’t built on platforms, but on personal connection. Whether from the stage or in a grocery store line, Dodie was known to stop and pray. “Just talk to Him like a

little child," she would tell those in need. "Tell Jesus you want to be well, and He'll meet you."

To this day, her legacy continues not only through the global reach of Lakewood Church but in the thousands of people who tell stories of how Dodie Osteen's love and prayers changed their lives.

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Her message remained consistent through the decades: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Prepared by Charisma Media Staff.