

How Dodie Osteen Stepped in When This Prominent Preacher's Mother Died of Cancer

This is part 2 of a two-part series. [Click here for part 1.](#)

Preparing the Way

In hindsight, I can see the Lord's preparation had begun long before my mother showed up that weekend with her list.

In October before she passed away, my sister, brother and I pulled together the money for her to fly with me to Japan, where she visited family while I ministered. After I finished my teaching commitment, I was able to join them for our final day before departing for the U.S.

The day after we returned to Houston, my little nephew Randy kept calling from Austin to say, "Mammaw, are you coming home today?" Only five months later, she truly had gone home.

Sushi, Shoes and Salsa

Her memorial service was a beautiful mixture of tearful good-byes and happy remembrances. My mother had a soft heart that welcomed people into her life and made them feel like family. Close friends shared of the joy and laughter she brought into their lives. She loved to cook for people, and she would have neighbors over for "girls' nights" at my sister's house, serving them sushi and outdancing every one of them!

Others remembered Mother teaching them a Japanese "fan dance" and the jitterbug. "But don't tell Dougie!" she would say. And I recalled her participation in what became known as the "salsa revival night" at Houston's Prayer Mountain, a series

of 40 days of worship, the last 40 days of 1996. As local Hispanic leaders led us in worship that night, a spirit of overwhelming joy and exuberance broke out resulting in a salsa line of praise to the Lord. As Mother danced past me, she said, "Dougie, what's the matter with you? Come on! Let's praise the Lord!"

How precious it was to see my mother, whom I had the pleasure of leading to Christ, praising the Lord that way.

Family First

Friends at the funeral confirmed how much family meant to my mother. "Kenny," they said, "your mother always believed in you and wanted so badly for you to believe in yourself. Jeanne, she always talked about what a good mother you are and what a good daughter. Doug, she was so proud of you because you are doing what God called you to do."

A Fighting Spirit

Yet for all the joy she brought and her love for laughter, my mother was a fighter, too. As a little girl during World War II, she was separated from her family for an entire year. She ate out of garbage dumps to survive. She told us how they learned to run fast enough to keep up with the shadows of the planes so they could dodge the bomb shells as they dropped.

I remember as a young boy how my mother and I were kicked out of a restaurant in Green Bay, Wisconsin, for being Japanese. But my mother never held on to bitterness or kept a wounded spirit and taught us not to retain other people's issues or prejudices as our own. It's their problem, not ours! Interestingly, in a humorous twist, she was later hired by the owner of the restaurant as he apologized for the actions of his employee. The whole time we were growing up, she worked extra jobs to provide for her family. She later became a naturalized U.S. citizen, and she was so proud to be an American.

Mother's courage conflicted with her commitment to family as she entered this short, final season of life. After her diagnosis, we sat in the doctor's office as she boldly declared, "I'm not afraid to die—I know Jesus!" Then, with tears, she added, "But I want to see my grandchildren grow up."

Final Days

I got an emergency call from my sister on Sunday, April 17, and drove to Austin with out-of-town guests to see my mom, then drove back to Houston Monday afternoon. I was scheduled to speak on Tuesday evening at an orientation meeting for a team of 26 people who were going to represent Houston at the Transform World Conference in Indonesia. My plan was to drive back to Austin afterward.

Around mid-day on Tuesday, Jeanne called and asked, "How important is your meeting?" When Mother woke up that day, Jeanne said, she had asked, "Where's Dougie?" Then, "Is Dougie here yet?" and finally, "Tell Dougie I love him."

Needless to say, I left immediately for Mother's bedside.

Those next few hours and that next day were moments I will treasure forever. When I arrived and walked in her room at my sister's home, she looked up and mustered up the strength and told us she loved us. Jeanne had asked her earlier if the Lord had been showing her anything about heaven and if she was afraid. "I'm not afraid," Mother said.

At one point, she and I were alone, and she looked at me with knowing eyes and said, "Dougie, pray." In that moment, my mother seemed to see me both as "son" and "minister." I could imagine in just a small way how Mary felt as she knew Jesus as the Son of God, yet he was her son, too. I felt as if I was praying for her soon transition into the presence of the Lord. The memory of her eyes looking up at me is a moment I will never forget.

Life Without Mom

The day after the funeral, I sat alone in the house going through my mother's things, and it was one of the hardest things I ever had to do. The void was deep and unexpected. Mom was only 69 years old when we lost her.

I drive past certain restaurants and other places that now bring back precious memories. The PetSmart store is a personal reminder to me of that last weekend we had in Houston as she gave me commands about what kind of dog food to buy!

My sister shared at the funeral how everything she knows about being a wife and a mother, she owes to my mother. And probably for the first time in my life, I realize how much of who I am and how much of what I'm doing I owe to my mother as well.

As Mother's Day comes up and I think of my mother, I miss her very much. Though I didn't always have the words to tell her when she was here, I think she knew we all loved her.

I remember in the hospital when she leaned over and said to me, "Dougie, I'm going to beat this, you know!" And, Mom, you did beat it. Your son-in-law Paul said you taught him how a Christian dies. You passed on to eternity beautifully, with courage and grace and leaving behind a legacy of love.

Thank you, Mom, for everything. I rejoice now for the day I will join you in that "salsa revival line" in heaven, dancing with you and Jesus!

Mothers in the Faith

Dodie Osteen, widow to the late John Osteen, has been so kind and gracious and faithful to pray for many people over the years. When I lost my mother to cancer, she said to me, with a mother's heart, "I want you to know I'm going to be a mother to you now." She has been so gracious and kind to my family.

Barbara Byerley, former president of Women's Aglow

International, has also been there for me since I lost my mom. She would come faithfully to our office every Tuesday with other intercessors to pray for our city, the nations and the nations of the world. She would often say to me, "I'm so proud of you, like a mother is proud of her son." I often heard her say to others, "I'm so proud of my son Doug."

That was such a needed part of my life because I didn't have a mother with me any longer. But I had these women who are spiritual giants in the kingdom of God who took it upon themselves to imbibe me into their hearts and prayers.

My mother never got to meet my wife, Lisa, or our family, but we were honored to have Dodie and Barbara both stand in for my mom to pray over us at our wedding. That is the beauty of legacy, kingdom, relationship and honor.

No Regrets

Unfortunately, it seems this type of honor for previous generations is becoming a lost art. Even today, as I'm married and have a family, I think of my mother often and the importance of not having regrets.

I am so glad I honored my mom by letting her live with me for eight years. I am so thankful for the time we had together, and I wouldn't trade a single day for anything in the world—even as difficult as it was at times. When mom moved in, she took over the whole house—she got the master bedroom, I got the guest bedroom. And it was my house! Once when she told me take my shoes off, I reminded her whose house it was—but she would have none of it. She reminded me, instead, that she was the one who used to change my diapers!

I also see God's sense of humor in it all. My mom liked the thermostat at 77-78 degrees, and I like it at 70 or 72. Now, my wife Lisa likes it at 77-78!

Lisa is like my mom in other ways as well. She, too, is a

fighter. And her mother, Maria, lives with us. God sets the lonely in families, and we are truly blessed beyond measure.

Mom Was Right

When it comes to family, we all have different stories. But the one greatest story of all is Jesus Christ and His love for us. Through our belief in Him, we have a guarantee of rejoicing and dancing together in eternity.

As we come into Mother's Day, we honor all of you mamas out there. But some of you, perhaps, haven't talk to your mother for a while, or maybe you realize you haven't been honoring those in the former generation. I want to encourage you to take some time to honor your parents and others in your life. You may not always agree with them, but there is something about respect and honor that releases the blessings of God.

I am so thankful I have no regrets when it comes to my mother. I honored her by caring for her. My brother, sister and I obeyed that simple small voice that said to buy her an airplane ticket so she could see her family in Japan. And we honored her every time we took off our shoes before coming in the house.

I am convinced that when I get to heaven, my Mom will be waiting for me. She'll say to me, "Doug, take your shoes off. This is holy ground." And once again, Mom will be right.

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