

The Secret Behind Jack Hayford's Success

Jack Hayford is arguably the most-respected Pentecostal leader of our generation. In 2005, *Christianity Today* magazine called him “the Pentecostal Gold Standard” on its cover. (By the way, they pulled that from a quote from me used in the article. When the author interviewed me, that was my genuine assessment of this great man of God. I never imagined the magazine’s editors would decide it made a great cover line!)

Apart from God’s grace, there is another reason Jack Hayford has been successful in the ministry—Anna Marie Hayford, his wife of 62 years, whom they laid to rest last week in Los Angeles. I had the privilege of attending her three-hour-long memorial service at a packed-out Church On The Way in Van Nuys, California. Family members and friends shared variations of the same statement: There never would have been a Jack Hayford (as we know him) or The Church On The Way without Anna’s steady influence.

Because of my long and close relationship with the Hayfords, I knew firsthand that what they said about her was true. She was simple, practical and comfortable in any setting—whether spending time with ordinary people like the farmers she grew up with in Nebraska or attending a state dinner with her famous husband. Jack and Anna’s oldest daughter, Rebecca Bauer, summed it up best: “She was simple, but classy,” adding that her mother brought sparkle wherever she went. And although she was known for her quiet demeanor, the family knew she was sometimes “sassy” in an endearing sort of way.

Anna was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer a little more than a year ago. That she lived this long was a miracle, something I wrote about last August. When she breathed her last on March 8 at 3 a.m., her husband held her hand. At the

same time on the east coast, I thought about Anna and decided to call later that day to see how she was doing.

At her memorial service, Pastor Hayford, in his inimitable style, told mourners how he and Anna fell in love as Bible college students in the early 1950s. He even spoke of how they locked fingers in a special way the first time they held hands. As she lay in a coma, dying, they locked fingers the same way once again as she passed into eternity.

“Anna made me the most blessed husband who ever lived,” he said. “I could have had no greater gift for the life we led, and I can’t imagine a more fulfilling life than we led.”

He also shared a page from his journal on Feb. 7–29 days before she died—in which the Lord told him to prepare to “escort your lady into My presence.”

For those accustomed to hearing Pastor Hayford expound on truths in the Word, this journal entry, in which he described the love of his life, was a peek into his heart.

I could write so much more about Anna Hayford, including quotes of the many warm, loving memories shared at her funeral. You can read more about her life [here](#). Suffice it to say she was a woman who loved God and served Him, her family and her church with all her heart. She will be remembered long for the legacy she left. Isn’t that what each of us should want when our time on Earth ends?

With his permission, I will close by sharing what Pastor Hayford wrote in his journal on Feb. 7, 2017:

From this day, escort your lady into My presence.

I gave her to you for the mission, journey, joy, family and fruitful service of My people and the advance of My kingdom.

You have been faithful to one another just as you have been to My call and the work it has required.

Your journey together on Earth is drawing to a close.

I will shortly take her into my eternal presence; give yourself and your time to her lavishly—preparing for the joy that is set for her.

I will not leave you without comfort and care when she leaves; indeed, as you have clearly seen, I have been preparing the way for your tomorrows until I bring you into My eternal presence. Rest and rejoice—your God and Savior are with you and moving before you. {eoa}