

Some memories about Mom from eldest, Sherlene, 15 Oct 2007:

What I probably value most in my mother, Ida-Rose Langford Hall, is her unwavering faith. I use the present tense, because I still draw on her example, though she left us two years ago.

Mom grew up in a home where her father was less active in the Church, which was painful for her mother. When Mom started dating my father, she knew his unwavering testimony and devotion to Church standards was what she wanted in her life. So she quickly gave up her Coke and Sunday movies, to which she never returned. Dad spoke like a farm boy, with bad grammar (which she patiently tutored after their marriage). He also came from a comparatively poor economic background, but Mom knew what really mattered. Her faith, choosing me a father with such integrity and devotion to the gospel has greatly blessed my life and became a standard for choosing my own dear husband.

Several instances of Mom's faith come to mind. The one of perhaps most enduring significance was her support of Dad in calling us to family prayer and scripture reading over breakfast, each morning. He let his own breakfast get cold, while we ate and he read a chapter and then discussed with us what he had just read. Mom was pregnant with my six younger siblings much of the time while I was growing up. She suffered terrible mood swings and chemical imbalances, with each. I know she was often tired and ill. It was not easy for her, but she had the faith to rise early and get a fortifying breakfast, right on time, for her family, so that Dad could have his little devotional with us and still drive some distance to work.

I don't think I truly appreciated her effort until I suffered my own pregnancies and got up to get breakfast and carry on that same tradition. Mom also gave Dad her total support in holding a weekly family home evening long before it was emphasized in the Church, as it is now. Any suggestion by local or general church authorities, was greeted with full support by both our parents.

Dan and I recently enjoyed memorable family home evenings in homes of both our children, who now live in Herriman, Utah and New York City. Those sweet moments fortified my appreciation for my mother's faith. It must have been a challenge to start new traditions she did not enjoy in her own home, but she did not hesitate, to our blessing.

I remember that sad day when we got a call that my brothers and two cousins were involved in a serious scouting accident (brakes failed in a truck carrying the boys and it rolled over a cliff, killing many). Dad was then serving in the bishopric. We did not know the status of those in our family--only heard a report that many had died and those remaining were seriously injured.

Dad took me aside and told me was going down to southern Utah, near "Hole in the Rock," to the accident site, so wanted me to stay by Mom's side and help her any way I could. He especially wanted me to be there to comfort and watch over her, in case she got bad news.

I was scared and suggested to Mom that we pray together. Mom told me she already had, but agreed to kneel with me, again--probably for my comfort. When we rose from that prayer, she said, "Sherlene, I don't know if it's just because I think this couldn't happen to me or if it's inspiration, but I feel strongly that your brothers are all right. I feel certain that they are alive and are not seriously hurt, so try not to worry. I don't know about your cousins, but I have assurance about my boys." Then she got on the phone with the other parents and got busy in her kitchen, cooking up a storm, so she could bring in meals to the families of those whose boys were not as well off as hers. We did not know the outcome until that evening, after some of the longest hours I ever suffered through—hours that Mom seemed to take in stride.

That practical approach to worrisome situations was typical of Mom. She was not one to mope around and fuss, but had the faith to leave outcomes in the Lord's hands, while she remained alert for ways to ease whatever difficulties presented themselves. Her no-nonsense attitude not only blessed our family, but many neighbors and friends.

As a teen, I did not always appreciate Mom's practical approach to life. When my school years ended, I came home, glad that final exams were over and looked forward to some rest and summer fun. Mom invariably greeted me at the door with a list of jobs I could accomplish at home, starting the very next day, if I did not want to get immediate outside work. To her, idleness was the devil's workshop, and we weren't going there—at least not while under her supervision!

When I learned that she had cancer, I hurried over and, trying not to cry, told her I was angry that she had to go through this. "Now, Sherlene, you can't question the Lord's will in our lives. It's in His hands. That's all that matters." My sister Nancy, who lives just across the street from my parents, told me Mom went through the usual range of emotions on hearing the news. To me, though, she put up a solid faith-front that never faltered during the three-year ordeal, fighting and finally losing to this dread disease. In dying, her concern was for Dad, who by then suffered advanced effects of Alzheimers. She let each of us know that "The hardest part of dying is knowing I won't be here for him."

Words seem weak, trying to describe Mom's kind of strength. I will always count as a "greatest" blessing, having had Ida-Rose Langford Hall, as my mother. I aspire to be more like her. I hope my children and grandchildren will honor her name and value her legacy.

Sherlene Hall Bartholomew
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