

MY SISTER - BETTY CURCIO -

(Elizabeth Josephine Zulker Curcio - April 9, 1921 - October 5, 2011)

My sister, Betty Curcio, was a remarkable person. She knew everybody, and everybody knew her.

It was always an interesting experience when I met a stranger and said, "Betty Curcio is my sister." Immediately, I had a new friend.

Some siblings, as well as some children, dislike being referred to as the son or daughter of Mr. and Mrs. So and So. That was never a problem for me. I liked being known as "Betty's Brother." It gave me a sense of importance in their eyes as well as in my own. She also seemed to like introducing me to her friends, We were proud of each other and we never let anyone think differently.

Betty was an activist! and that was obvious. She liked to get involved, not from any sense of intruding or being in control. She just wanted to help in any way she could.

Generally, she could find something that needed to be done, and without waiting for someone to ask her, she just jumped right in and did it.

Betty loved Christ and the church. One of my earliest remembrances of her was in my youth when she was so active in the youth fellowship of the church and in the New Jersey State-wide Christian Endeavor programs. She played the piano as well as held various offices in the organization. She liked to sing and joined the choir and a women's trio.

She played the piano for my two brothers and me when we started holding meetings in local churches as "The Zulker Trio." It should have been called, "The Zulker Quartet" to include her.

She loved her Bible and knew it well. I recall one time when at one of our meetings I asked her to give a testimony for Christ. It was at our grandfather's church in New Jersey. It was a small church with a pulpit or platform about two steps higher than the congregation where the piano was located. As she got up from the piano bench and started up the steps, she tripped. Recovering well, she stepped up and quoted I Corinthians 10:12, "Let him who thinks he stand, take heed lest he fall."

Wow! how appropriate and timely. But then she went on to quote the next verse, "There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, and will not permit you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will with the temptation also provide a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

TREMENDOUS. WHAT A TESTIMONY! WHAT A PROMISE!

As I said earlier, everybody knew Betty, and she knew everyone - not just their names, but also the names of their spouse, their children, their parents, where they lived, worked, etc. It was not because she was nosey --- she really cared about each one - and you knew it. Your pain was her pain, your sorrow hers, your joy she shared as though it were her own. Oh that we had more like her - and that we could be like her.

In those times when she was hurt or disappointed, times when some people choose to be angry and bitter, she chose to be understanding and forgiving. She let the past be past, and moved on gracefully with her usual optimism and vigor.

Though she seemed to have little interest in politics or world affairs, she took great interest in Christian organizations and what they were doing for Christ. She listened

to Christian radio and television programs and got to know people she never met, but talked about them as though they were life-long buddies. She got on everybody's mailing list and mistakenly felt as though they knew her, too. But that was ok.

Though she probably knew more about you than you had wished or hoped, whatever she said about you was always good. Somehow, she could always see what was best in the person - surely that was the Lord's doing, and I personally am very, very glad about that. For me, that was very beneficial.

Betty knew the meaning of Robert Browning's verse, "Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be, the last for which the first was made: Our times are in his hand Who said, 'A whole I planned, youth shows but half; trust God: see all, and never be afraid!'"

She believed in Heaven and in the promise of Christ who said, "I go to prepare a place for you that where I am, there you may be also." And that is the reason why today, our sorrow, our mourning, is mixed with the faith to believe that, with her, all is well.

William Cullen Bryant, that great early American poet gave all of us a challenge to life when he wrote,

"So live, that when thy summons comes to join the innumerable caravan which moves to that mysterious realm, where each shall take his chamber in the silent halls of death, thou go not, like the quarry slave at night, scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams."

That was the way my sister lived, and that was the way she died. May we follow in her steps.

And so, as this chapter in our lives, written by Betty Zulker Curcio, has come to a close, we can only look back and say, "Thank you Lord for our Sister, Mother, Grandmother, Aunt, Friend - Betty!; and thank you Betty, for being there for us.

We hope always to remember you, and your walk with the Lord.

Bill Zulker
October 30, 2011
Memorial Service