



# JUDY

I remember her welcoming, warm smile the first time we met. **Judy Hooven** was not someone to stand apart or hold you back from approaching her. I knew from our first meeting that we would be friends in spite of our age difference. Laughter draws me like a magnet and Judy's laughter was infectious.

Judy, precious Judy, standing tall and confident. Her eyes sparkled with a zest for life. Adverbs and phrases such as positive, lovely, busy, energetic, sense of humor, and intelligent cannot come close to describing her. Her gifts of ministry were received at Shawnee Church of the Nazarene with thankful hearts. God's grace flowed through Judy in her Sunday School teaching, her beautiful singing, personal testimony, mentoring, discipleship and simple friendship. Love for her family: Crista Joy, Cambria and Jeff was evident.

When Judy found that she would be battling cancer, she drafted three women friends to join her in the battle. During those years we met each Tuesday evening. We wanted so much for Judy. We wanted her health back. Those Tuesdays were precious to all of us and a time of spiritual growth. The four of us poured over scripture desiring to touch God's heart in a way that would give us hope. We called out for deliverance. We needed God's love to wash over us, and His grace to surround Judy. At times we were desperate for renewed hope and courage as though we were climbing and scratching our way to the top of a mountain.

We held on to the knowledge that God welcomed us into His presence, that He indeed is approachable. A verse of an **Edna St. Vincent Millay** poem reminds me of those times of desperately searching out the heart of God.

*O God ... no dark disguise  
can e're hereafter hide from me  
Thy radiant identity!  
Thou canst not move across the grass  
But my quick eyes will see Thee pass,  
Nor speak, however silently,  
But my hushed voice will answer Thee.  
I know the path that tells Thy way  
Through the cool eve of every day;  
God, I can push the grass apart  
And lay my finger on Thy heart!*

Every Tuesday we "pushed the grass apart" and partook of the Lord's Supper together reaching out for God's grace upon grace. This was of great importance to Judy. She didn't want to miss the experience of the Lord's Supper together each week. "Take drink." "Take eat, given freely for us." We found God's heart and in turn His grace filled our hearts. The tears flowed and laughter was regained. Always there was praise and worship for our Creator. We would call out to God to "be a sheltering rock" for Judy "always accessible," Psalm 71:3-6). And so He was. Judy was an over-comer and victorious!

She was able to touch hearts and connect with people in a way that was significant. When in the hospital for her many chemo treatments she touched the lives of those who cared for her. She related with them in a lighthearted manner causing laughter to fill the room. The "peace that passes all understanding" surrounded her and allowed God's rest to invade and give sanctuary in that setting.

Judy found comfort in the book, *In God's Waiting Room*. The experiences of which the author wrote helped her more consistently to submit her circumstances to

God. She struggled to become more patient, waiting for God to do His work. It wasn't easy, but she tenaciously held on to God's promises.

I have wonderful images of Judy that are easy to call up. One is the joy she experienced when Jeff walked into his 50th surprise birthday party that she had carefully planned. He was definitely surprised and the evening was a fun, fun time.

There was Judy at Godfather's for pizza on Sunday evening and Mexican food at a favorite restaurant when Jeff would bring his own butter for the tortillas.

And Judy blessing the congregation with song on Sunday mornings.

One of my favorite memories is Judy dancing at our son's wedding. She was in treatment and not feeling well at the time, but was determined to attend the wedding and reception. I will never forget her, not feeling well, in her house slippers, holding hands with Crista Joy and me dancing. What a sight the three of us must have been, but what joy filled her eyes. Judy never gave up living.

My last memory of Judy speaks of the love she offered to so many. She was lovingly being cared for in her parents' home and her days were few on this earth. I knelt by the bed and took her hand. She opened her eyes and we were able to speak our last words to each other. Her last words to me were, "I love you." That same love was offered to everyone she came in contact with. Simply stated, she loved people.

I believe Judy now perfectly understands all there is to know about "God's Waiting Room." I believe if we could converse, she would tell me that all of us will have "waiting room" experiences. That some of us will be in there for long periods and others, it won't be long at all. That most often there is no "quick fix." She would tell us that God has not forgotten nor forsaken us. She would tell us to submit to God's plan, enter into His sanctuary, and look away from the "dark disguise."

She would tell us to "push the grass apart" and "lay our finger on His heart."

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by Fran Godfrey.