

Anna

"Loyal Followers"

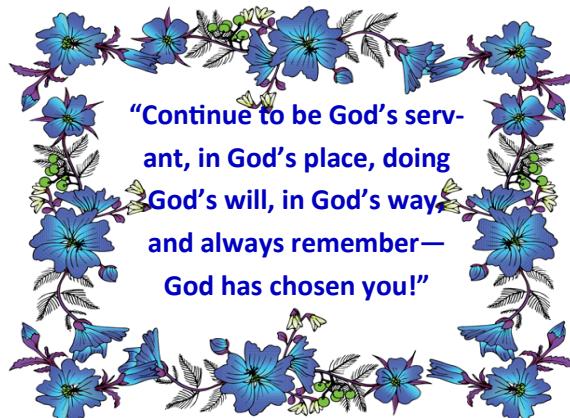


"And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of Him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem."
Luke 2:38

Anna is called a Prophetess in the Bible. We think of prophets as being male, and certainly having more recognition than a few verses in Luke. But God cares for all of us, whether we are rich or poor, young or old. We can all be one of His loyal followers.

Luke tells us that Anna had only been married seven years when she was widowed and she spent the rest of her life in the temple praying and fasting daily until she was eighty-four when she was given a great honor. For seventy-seven years we are told she actually lived at the temple. Perhaps she had no income and the temple was her home or maybe she chose this way of living for her God. We don't know; it is not important. It is important to know that she was a devout woman of faith.

Losing her husband after so few years of marriage must have been devastating, but her faith remained strong. Rather than feeling sorry for herself, she devoted her life to serving God. Our lives are shaken many times by experiences and sometimes we do not react positively as Anna did. The death of a loved one is a traumatic experience, and people react differently. But the most important thing is to keep God at the center of our reaction. I know several widows and widowers who have reacted in much the same way as Anna. They don't fast or live at the church, but they live their lives filled with God's love and grace, and are a tremendous witness to many other people. They feel the loss of their loved one very deeply, but they have decided to live their lives in a positive way. They are a blessing to those around them.



The law at that time required the parents to take a new child to the temple and to present a purification offering. This is to take place when the child is forty days old. When Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem



Psalms 27:1

to be circumcised, an older gentleman named Simeon blessed Jesus and then right away an older woman named Anna spoke up and

gave thanks to God and verified to the people that this was indeed Jesus, the Redeemer, and the promised Messiah. What an honor that must have been for her. Even though she was old, there was still work for her to do for her God. There is no retirement for Christ or for us. We can always do something.

Scripture also tells us that Anna recognized Christ when she first saw Him. Even though He was a tiny infant, she knew He was the Savior she and the people had been waiting for. She was given the honor to see the Promised Child and proclaim His love to all who were there. I wonder how people reacted to an eighty-four old lady saying that this Child was the one who would save the people and redeem Jerusalem. I think there were some who thought she was just a crazy old lady, but God had planted the seeds of His mission so I think some listened to her and believed she was telling the truth.

Simeon had received a vision that he would not die until he had seen the Lord and the salvation of the Jews

and Gentiles. This must have been a glorious day. Two elderly people who were faithful servants were given the honor of telling the people that this Babe was indeed the promised Messiah.

We may not have been given the gift of prophecy, but we can witness every day. There is not a task too lowly for Christ and there should not be one for us either. All we need to do is serve the Lord each day just by the way we live and take the opportunities that come our way for service to others and to proclaim the Good News to others. Regardless of age, there is a job for each of us to witness by our words, our actions, or our reactions. In the story of Anna, we have the witness from a young child only forty days old and an eighty-four year old lady, and an aged man along with the young parents. We can always serve, but sometimes we ask why or how. Our attitude determines our response to God's call just as it did for Anna.

"God has not called me to be successful. He called me to be faithful."

Mother Teresa



THAT VOICE WITHIN

**My Lord, He called again today
He wants me to do "What"!**

**He knows I have a hectic schedule
A daily routine, things to do.**

**I have no extra time to sew,
Bake cookies, Visit the ill,
Do a devotional, Make some
phone calls,**

**Pray for a friend, Go to meetings,
Help support the youth, Serve on
a committee.**

**I use my talents every day,
But let's not expect too much, God
Once a week is fine**

**I don't bother Him!
Why should He bother me?**

Prayer: Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, and Everlasting Father I thank You for Your love. I thank You for coming to earth as an Infant and giving Your life so that we could have Eternal Life. Eternal Life is a gift we don't deserve. We don't deserve so much that You have given us. Help us to accept Your gifts and use them to help tell others about Your love and sacrifice for us. Amen.

1. How can we be like Anna as far as her witnessing was concerned?
2. What gifts have you been given that you can share and tell of God's love?
3. How would you react to an old woman, who almost seemed like a recluse, prophesying the message like Anna did?
4. Sometimes I want to shy away from talking about Christ in certain situations. Do you ever experience that same feeling? Why do you think we do? What can we do to change that situation?
5. Was Anna what we call a prayer warrior?

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Always pray to have eyes that see the best in people, a heart that forgives the worst, a mind that forgets the bad, and a soul that never loses faith in God.