

West Texas woman celebrates century of faithfulness

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SNYDER—Like many other congregations, Colonial Hill Baptist Church in Snyder honored the mothers in attendance in worship on Mother's Day. This year, the church recognized one member who should be, according to Pastor Tommy Culwell, an inspiration to all.



Jessie Etheredge
Jessie Etheredge, age 103, has been a mother 80 years. After growing up in Richland Springs in Central Texas, she moved to Hobbs in West Texas. There, she taught elementary school and eventually she met and married Wilma Burkett "Tuff" Etheredge.

On a cotton farm in Roscoe, Etheredge raised eight children, six of whom earned college degrees. She has 16 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren

and two great-great-grandchildren. The twin foundations of faith in God and the importance of education still are evident in her family.

The idea and expectation to attend church every Sunday began at a young age for Etheredge. She regularly attended a small church in Richland Springs with her grandfather.

“We went every Sunday to a little old church named Lakeview,” Etheredge said. “I wouldn’t call it a habit, but after a while, it’s just built in.”

Scripture-filled upbringing

Etheredge continued the tradition as she raised her own family. As well as bringing her eight children to church every week, she repeatedly quoted Scripture at home and instilled in them the expectation and desire to grow in faith by attending church every week.

“In my opinion and personal experience, your week doesn’t go as well if you don’t go to church,” Etheredge’s daughter Helen Mock said.

As well as maintaining church attendance, Etheredge has continued to keep a close relationship with her family. She and her daughter can list each member of the family, where they are, what they do and where they went to college.

Although Etheredge’s children and grandchildren have grown up and scattered, they still find time for family, and most even made it back to West Texas for her birthday on April 21.

“We all get together the weekend before Christmas, and most of the time everybody comes,” Mock said. “Most of the time, we have the entire room full of family.”

Although Etheredge “likes to pick on him,” Culwell speaks highly of her and the faith she has maintained throughout her lifetime.

“She really has an amazing mind for somebody her age,” Culwell said. “She’s so sharp, and she’s here every Sunday. It’s rare for her to miss church, and she’s just so very faithful and a delight to be around.”

Church every Sunday

Etheredge lives in Snyder with her daughter Helen and quilts in her free time. She continues to attend church every Sunday, just as she has her entire life.

In previous years, Etheredge ministered to those in the church who had lost loved ones by bringing them food and providing a word of encouragement, Culwell said.

“There’s probably not another mother quite like this, who’s been a mother for 80 years and has continuing faithfulness to God,” he said. “It would just encourage others to know about her. Faithfulness isn’t flashy. It’s consistent. She’s just consistent.”