

A Prayer for a Husband



Ruth Bell was born on June 10, 1920, in Qingjiang, Jiangsu, China, the second of five children. Her parents, Dr. L. Nelson Bell and Virginia McCue Bell, were medical missionaries at the Presbyterian Hospital 300 miles north of Shanghai.

At the age of 13, she enrolled in high school in Pyongyang, Korea, where she studied for three years. Her intention was to become a confirmed old-maid missionary to Tibet.

But she did give the thought of a husband some serious consideration. She wrote the following list of particulars:

If I marry: He must be so tall that when he is on his knees, as one has said, he reaches all the way to heaven. His shoulders must be broad enough to bear the burden of a family. His lips must be strong enough to smile, firm enough to say no, and tender enough to kiss. Love must be so deep that it takes its stand in Christ and so wide that it takes the whole lost world in. He must be active enough to save souls. He must be big enough to be gentle and great enough to be thoughtful. His arms must be strong enough to carry a little child.

It must be that God gave Ruth Bell the description of her future husband.

Ruth completed her high school education at Montreat, North Carolina, while her parents were there on furlough. She graduated from Wheaton (Illinois) College. It was at that school where she met her future husband, Billy Graham. They were married in 1943, shortly after their graduation. The Grahams have five children: Virginia, Anne, Ruth, Franklin and Nelson Edman; 19 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren.



Ruth Graham was always a vital part of Billy Graham's evangelistic career, and he turned to her for advice and input about many ministry decisions. In 1966, she founded the Ruth and Billy Graham Children's Health Center in Asheville, North Carolina, with which she was actively involved until her death in 2007.

The husband Ruth had described as a teenager became a Southern Baptist minister, hosted crusades around the world, spent six decades on television, hosted the popular radio show, *Hour of Decision*, and helped shape the worldview of fundamentalists and evangelicals. Through his preaching, he led millions to decisions for salvation in Christ.

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The conclusion for us? Obviously, praying for – and describing to God – the spouse one desires is obvious. But the lesson goes beyond that example.

We should be specific with God in our praise and concerns. He knows our hearts, but he wants to hear – and respond – to our needs and desires.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God (Philippians 4:6 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter