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Granny

"Feisty old ladies are the backbone of society."

Sandi Toksvig, *'Sunday Times' 2024*

At lunch with friends recently, the subject of my Granny came up. "Given that you regularly refer to your Granny in your 'Thought for the Day' pieces, why not do one that's headed "Granny", and tell us a bit more about someone who is obviously so important to you?" So, here it is.

My Granny lived till she was 95 and outlived my mother by a number of years. When our children were born, she was given the title, "Wee Granny" (to distinguish her from my slightly taller mother, who was the real granny) and my Wee Granny loved it. Like all her siblings, she was, indeed, wee (at least in height, if not in girth!) – four foot ten, to be precise. But while "wee" might have been appropriate for someone who was small in stature, what was never "wee" was the character of this remarkable woman. Her feistiness never diminished with the passing of the years.

As a teenager, she stood with her sister at harvest time at the "Feeing Markets" in Glasgow's Graham Square, ready to go to this farm or that; she milked cattle while still feeding my mother, her only child; she coped with a heavy-drinking, and often violent, husband; she could offer hospitality to anyone who visited; she cooked meals for "the old man" across the stair in her nineties when he was nearly twenty years younger; she royally entertained us with her rendition of *The Black Bear* on a harmonica at New Year parties; she was generous, funny fastidious, a story-teller and feisty, always feisty! And, above all, feisty in her faith.

She'd always been a Churchgoer, though, in her later years, she put her strength of faith down to a commitment made at a Billy Graham rally in Glasgow's Kelvin Hall in the 1950s. Into her nineties, she was at church every Sunday, and at a Salvation Army meeting every Tuesday. Hers was a feisty faith, strengthened by prayer and bible-reading, and always earthy, real, robust, simple and deep. It was a faith that sustained her through tough times and gave her reason to rejoice when things were good.

Wee Granny, I miss you, I admire you, I love you, I salute you. A feisty old lady as a backbone of society, as Sandi Toksvig suggests? Maybe. But this feisty Wee Granny has been, and will always be, a strength for me.

A prayer for today

For those who live by faith, because faith is their guide and strength, thank you God. Amen

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