

We Are Just Going to Trade Places

By Sim Butler

They all say that Ruth Chapman was an amazing woman. Her deacon said, "If you need a blessing, just go see Ruth". The Hospice staff looked forward to their visits with her because the experience was so uplifting. Faye Frady, Hospice nurse assistant, told about her first day with Mrs. Chapman, "I was so depressed when I got there, but I felt like walking on clouds when I left. She blessed me." Her faith was so strong and her capacity to love unconditionally so great that the positive impact on everyone who entered her world was compelling and inspirational.

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These strengths enabled her to accept her terminal diagnosis and be at peace with dying. "She went about consoling the family", according to her daughter-in-law, Brenda Chapman. Her outlook was consummate of the Hospice philosophy of accepting death as a natural part of life. When the news came that her time here was short, Brenda said, "a peace washed over her. She said, 'Don't pray for me to get well—Just pray for the Lord's will to be done'". When her sister, Margaret, told her not to give up, Ruth replied, "I'm not giving up—I'm just in a hurry to leave and see my old friends again". She proudly told her hospice nurse, Judy Wilson, about the great grandbaby that was due any day, and added, "We are just going to trade places." The baby arrived just 5 minutes after the start of Ruth's funeral.



Ruth Woody Chapman, the sister of well-known local chair maker, Max Woody, was frugal, hard working, and a devout Christian. Her husband, Tom, served his country during World War II. She saw to it that they saved enough even in those tough times, to buy their plot of land and build a small house. They raised 2 sons and she was a substitute schoolteacher for 17 years. The members at Clinchfield Baptist Church saw firsthand her strength of faith in her many activities there including helping start a cradle roll and involving young families in church life. That faith sustained her and is still supporting her loved ones.

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Ruth struggled to stay at home the last 4 years. She kept house from a wheelchair after she could no longer walk. Brenda related, "The most wonderful thing that Hospice has done, has been to allow her to die at home, with her family around her, with the dignity that she deserved.

Hospice makes sure that the patient gets the care that they need and the family gets the support that they need. Judy even came out on Christmas eve to help us". Less than a week before she died, Ruth herself gave the testimonial, "I can't say enough about Hospice—they help me so much". Brenda explained, "It is so comforting to know that Hospice is there. They take the burden of so many details off your shoulder". Clearly in this end-of-life period, Mrs. Chapman and her family experienced a better quality of life with Hospice care, and Hospice, in turn, received a lot of love.