

## *Pk's Perspectives ...Are you too busy to pray?*

"If you are too busy to pray, you are busier than God wants you to be." Wanda E. Brunstetter

The comfortable, bright red wingback chair was nestled in the corner of our living room. But this was more than just a place to sit. For many years it was a place of worship. A sanctuary to experience the very presence of a holy God. My late wife and I first purchased the chair sometime in the '80s from a friend in the furniture business in downtown Chicago. Originally covered in bright yellow fabric (Bobbie was a big fan of bright colors), its first home was our living room in Geneva, Illinois. Bobbie loved to begin each day perched in that quiet place, reading her Bible and praying. She called this chair her early morning "altar."

When we made the decision to move to the Sunshine State in 2000, the chair went with us. As yellow wasn't going to work with our new décor, Bobbie asked an upholsterer to give it a new outfit. Red was the choice and for 14 more years this is where she found herself every day at dark-o-thirty. Although I occasionally sat in the red chair at other times than early in the morning, this was Bobbie's chair. Of course, there were no posted rules about this, but it was her place to sit and read and study. So, I used other furniture and that was fine by me.

Like so many around the globe each year, cancer was what stole my wife at 64. Our journey with this disease began in 2012 with a visit to a woman's oncology clinic at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Orlando, near our home. I wish I could adequately describe what I felt that day, but the right words are beyond my reach. That visit to the second floor marked the beginning of a 30-month trial that ended on a chilly October day in 2014. Bobbie had been nothing short of a warrior. I tried to be too.

On the day of her funeral and burial, our house was a busy place. Neighbors had volunteered to prepare a lunch and our place was packed with neighbors and extended family. Connections, new and old, were made, and lively conversations were had. Bobbie would have been delighted. Taking a page from the homes of famous people from the past that I've visited, I stretched a ribbon across the seat of the red chair. Even though places to sit were at a premium that afternoon, no one trespassed the ribbon. Everyone knew about the red chair and asking visitors not to use it just seemed the right thing to do. Graciously, people left the chair alone, except to comment on the "thank you for not sitting here" ribbon.

Early, the following morning, I woke with a start. For the first time in almost 45 years, I was a single man. A widower. My new reality stared me in the face. But, wiping the sleep from my eyes, I knew I had an assignment. A new destination. Bobbie's red chair. Gingerly, almost reverently, I removed the ribbon, still there from the previous day's gathering, and sat down. In a voice just above a whisper, I confessed, "Lord, I've been a lazy man. I've watched my wife start her day with You for all these years." I took a deep breath, knowing the seriousness of this moment and the resolve of my heart.

From the red chair I said aloud. "As long as you give me breath, I intend to start each day with You." Bobbie's well-worn, One-Year Bible was on the little end table close by. I opened it and began the reading for the day marked November 15. Here is what it said to my heart that quiet morning: "Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its going down the Lord's name is to be praised." (Ps. 113:2-3 NKJV)

You likely don't have a red chair in your living room or study. But you have a place to sit. To lift up your eyes and your heart — from yourself and earth's demands and problems, to Heaven. And to embrace the wonder of a loving God who is eager to meet with you each day. My sincere hope is that my story will inspire you and that you'll purpose to start meeting with the Lord, reading His Word, and praying. If it does, you can thank that old red chair and my faithful, late wife who showed me what to do with it. (A life story from Robert Wolgemuth)

*Grace and peace, love you. PK*