

George's story

George was diagnosed with lung cancer on 15 April 1995. His eldest son was there at the time.

George had been a committed Christian all of his life. He approached death with a delightful acceptance. The word "delighted" was his.

George was cared for at home in his final days. On 16 July 1995, he celebrated his 69th birthday with his wife, sons, daughter, daughter-in-law and son's partner. On 23 July 1995, he died, as his priest was reciting the words of the Nunc Dimitis.

His funeral at which his eldest son spoke contained two hymns, both of them reflecting the Easter hope: „I want to be where you are" and „Thine be the glory".

Annie's story

Annie died on 30 November 1997 at the age of 91. She had danced with death for the last 25+ years of her life. This means that her quality of life had gradually deteriorated, and she had become wheelchair bound and virtually bed-ridden towards the end. Her eldest son sometimes managed to get her out of bed from time to time, but the effort had a detrimental effect on both of them for days afterwards.

Annie had a non-committal faith. She did not believe or disbelieve in God. As a child, she went to Church and encouraged her children to do so, but she had long since stopped going; faith was not deemed to be relevant to her life.

Annie had several strokes in the last 3 years of her life, and her family gathered on a number of occasions at her hospital bedside for her death. Each time she fought back, but emerged weaker and less able than before.

She died after a struggle with one of her sons and her daughter by her bedside; the other son she refused to see.

Her funeral had a hymn, which her eldest grandson sang quite well, and a Vicar who did not know the family or who had met them prior to the funeral. Death was a clinical release after years of struggle.

Reflection on these stories

1. How does it sound to use the word „delighted" alongside „death"?
2. Do you think it is possible for those without „faith" to approach death in such a way?
3. Can you understand with the feeling of „clinical release"?
4. In Thine be the glory; there is a line „where death is thy sting....?" How much sense does this make at a funeral service?

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Death and Resurrection



Case Studies

