

Mother's Day

R. Stanley, May 2026

Mother's Day is celebrated on the Second Sunday of May each year, in almost all the Nations. The Day for each of the members of the nuclear family is celebrated on the following days: Brother's Day on May 24, Father's Day on the Third Sunday of June, and Sister's Day on the First Sunday of August. I do not want to think of the Mother's Day coming first in the year as accidental! Jesus Himself is the "Seed of the Woman" (Gen 3:15). And this is the place of occurrence of the first Messianic Promise in the Bible! The virgin birth of Jesus has elevated motherhood to the zenith! It's her Baby which has brought us the greatest of all gifts and blessings: "God with us!" (Isa 7:14; Mt 1:23). What else is more important?

It was Adam who gave the name, "Mother," to a woman for the first time! (Gen 3:20). She was only his wife, not a mother yet! We call Patriarch Abraham as our father, but rarely Matriarch Sarah as our mother! But God puts both of them at the same level. See Isaiah 51:1,2, "Look to Abraham your father, the rock from which you were hewn, and to Sarah who bore you who is the pit from which you were dug." Not only Abraham but also Sarah is commended for her "faith" (Heb 11:8,11). While admiring Abraham for his faith, let's not fail to appreciate Sarah for hers too!

One of the earliest compound Names given to God was by a weeping mother, even Hagar (Gen 16:13). "*El-Roi*," meaning "You are the God who sees me!" It was by a "spring of water" in the dry desert (v7). Next time when she had to leave Abraham's house at the insistence of Sarah, her child was dying without water (21:15). Here God opened her eyes to see a "well of water" (v19). In the first instance, "God sees me!" In the next, "I see God!" Both to satisfy the parched thirst. Dear Mothers, God alone can satisfy your longings, which men often cannot understand. Take heart!

Rachel died of a hard labour. While dying, she named the boy child, "Ben-Oni," meaning, "Son of my Sorrow." But Jacob called him, "Benjamin," meaning, "Son of my Strength!" (Gen 35:16-19). Here's a message for sorrowing mothers, who outnumber the joyous. God is known for turning our mourning into dancing (Psa 30:11,12). "Weeping may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (v5b). Do you know that Apostle Paul came from the Tribe of Benjamin? (Phil 3:5). The supreme lesson he learnt in life is what strengthens us most: 2 Cor 12:9,10, "When I am weak, I am strong ... because Christ has told me, My strength will be made perfect in weakness!" Dear Moms, cheer up!

The very first family counsel for successful marriage was given by God Himself: Gen 2:24, “A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.” No cleaving possible without leaving! This timeless counsel was given even when there was no father, mother, father-in-law or mother-in-law! Who does not know that most of the marital problems among couples are due to the interference of the in-laws? This does not mean you should stop honouring your parents. There must be emotional detachment to minimise dependence. Honouring the parents must be for life. While giving the Ten Commandments, God promised “long days” (Ex 20:12). When Moses repeated it to the Israelites, he said, “good days” (Dt 5:16). Apostle Paul combined both “long” and “good” days in Ephesians 6:1-3. Dear Sons and Daughters, confess to God how you have failed to honour your parents, and commit yourself to honour them by supporting them in whatever way possible. This is for YOUR good!

It was the faith of Moses’ mother which was primarily responsible for his illustrious life spanning for 120 years. Her faith coupled with fearlessness was honoured by God (Ex 2:1-3; Heb 11:23). Samuel was a Prophet of Prayer. The first lessons on prayer were obviously taught by his praying mother, Hannah (1 Sam 1:10). I admire her poetic prayer pregnant with spiritual truths (1 Sam 2:1-10). I dare to say that Jesus learnt praying in the first instance from His mother, Mary. Her song is very similar to that of Hannah (Lk 1:46-55). Worship from an overflowing heart of thanksgiving! Praying mothers beget praying children. “Like mother, like daughter!”

Down through history, God has used praying mothers to grow leaders for the Church and the World. Elizabeth, with her devoted husband Zacharias, brought forth into the world John, the greatest of prophets! Eunice instilled profound faith in the heart of Timothy, a secondliner for Apostle Paul! Susanna Wesley’s rigorous prayer life gave the world two outstanding Revivalists, John Wesley and Charles Wesley! One of the 100 hymns by Judson Venter (1855-1939) begins like this: “*I never can forget the day I heard my mother kindly say, ‘You’re leaving now my tender care; Remember, child, your mother’s prayer!’*” Abraham Lincoln testified, “I remember my mother’s prayers, and they have always followed me. They have clung to me all my life.”

It was Ruth Bell Graham, wife of Dr. Billy Graham, who was responsible for bringing up their five children, besides supporting her busy husband in his itinerant worldwide ministry. She was a woman of disciplined prayer. I thank God for our mother, Anbu Rajamani (1924-1981), who in spite of our Dad mostly away for long in warfronts, taught me and my younger brother to pray. The first thing we saw when we got up from bed was her on knees at a corner! Every time I quote from memory

Bible verses during my sermons, I remember mummy who pumped the Scripture into my young heart (Lam 2:18,19).

Life does not come with a manual but with a mother. Abraham Lincoln said, "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother!" Without any exaggeration we can tell our mothers, "Mom, to the world, you are a mother. To me and our family, you are the world!" It was King Solomon's mother who set the crown on his head (SS 3:11). He very much stressed the mother's role in the life of her children in teaching them lessons for life: Prov 1:8, "My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother" (6:20). He specifically calls mothers the wise home-builders (14:1). He admonishes youngsters, "Do not despise your mother when she is old" (23:22b). The disobedient children bring shame ultimately to the mother (29:15). Who like him can list the delightful and desirable qualities of a wise mother? (Ch 31).

Naomi was a mother-like mother-in-law for Ruth (Ruth 1:8-18). From the very first day of marriage, it's the responsibility of the mother-in-law to make her daughter-in-law feel and understand that she has got a new mother! Her parents have lost a daughter but you have gained one. Forget it not! Look at her as a person, not a property! If she doesn't conceive for a couple of years, make sure your son also goes for medical test. Don't blame her if she consecutively gives birth to girl babies only. Do you know that it is the father's sperm that determines the sex of the child? There's too much of Hinduism in Christian families, sadly! (Eph 4:17-19). Encourage adoption without delaying for long. Are we not "adopted" children to God? (Rom 8:15).

Widowed mothers must be treated with love and dignity. Who said widows must not assist the bride and groom in cutting the wedding cake at Reception? Ours is the God of the widows unlike the gods and goddesses of other religions (Psa 68:5). The very definition of pure Christianity is first of all to care for the widows (Js 1:27). Widows can rear the children better than widowers. Do not female nurses hugely outnumber male nurses? Mothers are like buttons; they hold everything together. A mother's hug lasts long after she lets go! Quoting Lincoln again, "No man is poor who has a godly mother!" Someone said, "When you look into your mother's eyes, you know that's the purest love you can find on earth!" It's the mother who cries longer than anyone else when she loses a child (Jer 15:9). Even a giant like Paul never outgrew the refreshing love of a mother (Rom 16:13). The mooing of cows, whatever country they may belong to, is always, "*Amma*" or "*Ma!*"

Though the Bible seems to be emphasizing the men's role over that of women in the ministry, the unavoidability of womenfolk, especially mothers in this area, cannot be denied. The catalytic role of Deborah to stir up Barak to go to the warfront cannot be underestimated (Judg 5:12). Look at her unbeatable challenging words: "Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel!" (v7). One main reason for the weakness of the Church is its failure to tap the woman power. "Neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord" (1 Cor 11:11). The impact left in my native town, Nazareth, by a small team of praying mothers in the 1950s and 1960s is still felt. My mother was one among them. I learnt charity from her (Prov 31:20). Only a foolish man despises his mother (15:20). Beware of ravens and eagles who may pluck out your eyes and eat them if you mock your father or scorn your mother! (30:17).

Should we celebrate a particular day like this, as Mother's Day or Father's Day? It's optional, not a commandment. However it serves as an occasion to specifically remember the importance of a mother or father or sibling or whomever. My visits to my mother's grave bless me with tearful remembrances and a renewal to the values she taught (Gen 23:19; 35:19,20). Do thank your Mom as often as possible for the tasty dishes she serves and the orderly home she makes. When did you last do it? We must not take too many things for granted. For example, thinking of the motherless kids helps us increase our thanksgiving to God for our mothers. Finally, the New Jerusalem we are looking forward to becomes "our Mother!" (Gal 4:26).

