

Erlo Stegen:

Luke 2:36-38

Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; 37and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. 38And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Anna was an amazing woman. The Bible records that she lived as a virgin until her marriage and that she was married for only seven years. She was a widow of 84 years, or as some other translations have it - she had been a widow for 84 years, i.e. she was likely over 100 years old!

As her life is recorded in detail, so each of our lives are recorded in detail, and we will have to give account of everything we've ever thought, said or done. Woe to us if we haven't been reconciled to God and our fellowmen whom we've wronged, and are called to account on the Judgement Day.

Anna continuously served God in the temple day and night. She did not depart from the temple.

In 1Tim 5:3-5 we read, "Honor widows who are really widows. 4But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. 5Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day."

Here we see what a true widow is like. The Bible recommends that it is good that young widows marry and bear children, lest they fall into temptation, become busybodies, gossips and a burden to the church.

However, it is a great blessing if a widow serves God with all her heart night and day.