

Serving the True Family in England - Part 1

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As brothers and sisters of the same family, I am sure that at some time each one of us has wondered how we can love True Parents more and know them more fully. I remember when I first joined the Family, I asked one sister: "How can I love these two people whom we rarely see or speak with?" She told me I must pray and ask God to help me love True Parents more than anyone else I'd ever loved. I longed to feel that, since before I met the church I already had a relationship with Jesus that gave me so much joy and courage. I thought how wonderful it would have been to know Jesus when he was alive, in his everyday life. It would have been like seeing God face to face.

In my early days in the church, I wondered what it would be like if I ever met True Parents. I believed they would be able to see right through me, all my good points and all my faults. But it was four years before I could see Father for the first time. How I was longing to see him! The day True Parents arrived in London in May 1978 I happened to be working at the Church Headquarters at Lancaster Gate. When we found out that Father was coming with Ye Jin Nim and some of the other children, it was so exciting, but I think we all also felt very nervous.

Everyone had jobs to do to prepare for their visit. As I worked, I could hardly concentrate; it was hard to believe that Father would actually live in this same house. I tried to pray all day, but I was like a child waiting for Christmas Day.

My life before the church had not been an easy one, and I felt myself one of the least worthy persons to meet the Messiah. I felt I was the worst sinner, with no hope of ever meeting God. I know that Father always tries so hard to help us to feel like true sons and daughters, able to stand before God and see ourselves with pride. To them we are their children and God's children, to be loved and respected. All of these things I tried to grasp within the limits of my heart and understanding.

True Family in England

The day passed and evening came. True Father should have arrived in the early evening, but we received a message that he was being delayed at the airport and probably would not be allowed into the country. We were willing to pray all night if necessary, and gathered in the ballroom of Lancaster Gate to offer strong prayers. A message came at midnight that Father had been allowed in and would arrive within half an hour. We all gathered downstairs to bow to Father when he arrived. As he walked in the door, cheers rang out and everyone began to clap loudly. Father's face burst into the biggest smile, and as he climbed the stairs to his apartment, he waved to us all the way up. He prayed in his room and then we all gathered again in the Ballroom. Father spoke to us for a long time, until 4 a.m. We were a small group that night -- around 20 or 30 members -- and it was a very intimate feeling.

The next evening, there was a meeting for the entire English Family. I happened to be in one of the first rows, very close to Father. It was a dream come true. I wanted to watch Father's every movement. At one point our eyes met and instantly I thought to look away, but something even stronger said, "No! I want to see him!" I felt at that instant he could see my innermost character and heart. It was a matter of seconds, yet it felt so long.

Later the next day, I was asked to serve, taking care of Father's room with another sister. I was not yet blessed, so I felt uncomfortable, yet I was so happy. We had many different jobs to do: cleaning, carrying food from the kitchen to the apartment, preparing the table, making flower arrangements, shopping. It was the beginning of a most incredible five months.

Each day, Father awoke early, around 4 a.m. One brother used to bring in all the daily newspapers for Father to read. Breakfast began at 7 a.m., so we would begin to arrange the table around 6 a.m. There were always many leaders arriving from all over Europe, and of course the leaders for each region in England. The IOWC was in England at that time so there was a lot of action. The meals were really more like meetings that mealtimes. Our main goal was to make sure that the food arrived at the table quietly, carefully, and beautifully, without disturbing the conversations.

Preparing meals

Anyone who knows Lancaster Gate will know that the kitchen is downstairs in the basement. Father's room was on the second floor, two floors above the kitchen. We had a system which may sound a bit crazy, but in fact worked quite well. Lady Doctor Kim and a team of sisters prepared the food in the kitchen downstairs; there were two people to serve in Father's room, and then there was a team of "runners." As the word suggests, that is exactly what we did. We would pick up the food from the kitchen, beautifully prepared and set out onto nice trays; then we would go through the long corridors between the kitchen and the reception area, and next the two long flights of stairs to the apartment, going through all the swing doors from one floor to another. We had to do it as quickly as possible, without upsetting the well-prepared food. It was like those famous French waiters' racers who run as fast as possible with full glasses of wine, trying not to spill a drop.



Father and Ye Jin Nim on an outing in England

wonderful time for us.

If there was no lunch, that would be a day for extra shopping and making new flower arrangements for the apartment. We had fresh flowers every two days. But there were always bouquets to be made for visiting guests who arrived at the airports. We had a good relationship with the people at the nearby flower shop, who appreciated the sudden burst of business. Shopping was also a special experience. We tried to buy the most beautiful things we could find, and we soon learned where the best shops were.

Most days, Father was home for dinner, and the same system began again. When the meal was all served, we would wait in the corridor next to Father's apartment until we were needed.

We shared some wonderful moments outside the apartment. Father often came out to speak to people. One day he came out with two of the girls, In Jin Nim and Un Jin Nim; they were both about the same height, and Father measured them against the door post, to see who was the tallest. At times like that, Father was most relaxed and his face glowed with joy. It was easy at those rare times to see Father's simplicity. Usually, Father was busy with meetings and speeches, which took up so much of his time. But when Father was with someone, he gave all of himself to that individual for that time.

When we reached Father's room, we would exchange the tray for another tray with empty dishes and dash back to the kitchen. There were two of us on the "runners" team and as one went up, the other went down through the second set of stairs. Most people in Lancaster Gate knew the system and were fully prepared to jump back to make room for the oncoming runner. I don't remember any disaster, which shows the wonderful cooperation from the brothers and sisters and maybe a few helping angels to clear the way.

After a meal was served, the tempo slowed down a bit and we caught our breath as we cleared most of the dishes. Usually after breakfast Father would go out with the leaders to visit somewhere. It would soon be decided if Father would be there for lunch or not.

When everyone had gone, that was our chance to go into the dining room and clear the last of the dishes, tidy up the room, and put a beautiful clean white tablecloth on the table, ready for the next meal. After we would clean the rest of the apartment. The cleaning was done in peace and quiet and was a very