

# How do we find God?

**By Father Joseph Breighner**

On the first day of March I reached a personal milestone, turning 72 years of age. That has a special significance to me, since my mother died at age 72.

I'll never forget her final moments at Stella Maris hospice. My sister, Helen, and I stepped out of her room for a brief moment to speak with her doctor. In that brief time, my mother passed away. I'm told that people frequently die when loved ones are not with them. It's like their final gift to make their passing away less painful for the family.

Seventy-two seemed so old to me at that time. Now it seems so young.

In the Old Testament there is that famous line: "Seventy is the sum of our years, or eighty if we are strong." While modern medicine, nutrition and clean water have made it possible for more and more people to live longer lives, no one knows how long he or she will live. I keep looking at the back of my baptismal certificate to see if there is a warranty. There is none.

And while stories in the obituaries show people living into their 90s and 100s, the same obituary pages show others dying in their 40s and 50s.

How long should a life be? A quote from President Abraham Lincoln helps me. He was asked how tall a man should be, and he replied: "A man's legs should be long enough to reach the ground."

I think our lives should be long enough to reach God.

Some of us are old enough to remember the old commercial for Tareyton cigarettes, back in the days when companies were making longer and longer cigarettes. The Tareyton commercial said: "It's not how long you make it. It's how you make it long." Many of us were raised from childhood to believe in God, and we've kept our faith through all the years.

Others were raised with no faith, or abandoned their faith for new and different experiences.

I recall a friend of mine saying to a surgeon who had just finished treating a horribly burned person: "I'll say some prayers." The surgeon shot back: "What good would that do?" My friend's faith had helped her through losses and tragedies. The surgeon's faith was broken by the tragedies of life.

How do we find God? While that would require a separate article or book, let me suggest three things.

First, look at nature. Really see the sky, the clouds, the trees, the squirrels, etc. In creation we find God. Second, learn to just sit quietly with your eyes closed for a few minutes each day. God is found in silence. Finally, do all the good you can for as

many people as you can each day. God is found in love.

Death has come close to me in recent years. My sister, Margie, died in 2015. My sister, Helen, died in 2016. My brother-in-law, Mike, died in February of this year. Life does run out, but that's why we celebrate Easter, which this year is April 16. We believe that if we have died with Christ, we shall also live with Christ. As the prayer says, for us, life is changed, not ended. When this earthly body lies in death, we find an eternal dwelling place with God.

*Read more commentary [here](#).*