

Sunrise to Sunset – A Common Obituary

By Sheila Johnson

“From Sunrise to Sunset” is a phrase commonly used in many churches to begin the obituary for a person who has passed away. The obituary moves from their childhood to the day of their death and often draws a picture of their life, highlighting family, friends, achievements, and contributions to the world. Sunrise to sunset implies the completion of one day of our lives—a complete rotation of the sun.

The word ‘sunrise’ may be equated with new life, new beginnings, light, or even the Creation when God separated light from darkness. The beauty of a sunrise brings with it striations of colors quickly blocked by the brightness of the sun. On a cloudy day, shadows may even keep the naked eye from seeing the daytime body of light. Conversely, sunsets crowd the sky with some of the most beautiful combinations of color as the sun gently circles our planet and slowly disappears in the horizon. Sunsets suggest the end of life.

I have always been fascinated by sunrises and sunsets. Lately, I’ve been thinking about the length of my days, and how much or how little gets accomplished from sunrise to sunset. How important is my time spent with others and myself? How critical is it to my health that I exercise regularly and eat fairly healthy? What if I spent each day in my PJs and lounged all day long? What if I shut down my computer and refused to use my cell phone for an entire week? Who would really miss the sound of my voice? Who would miss my emails and Facebook postings? I’ve given it a lot of thought and concluded that I would be the one missing the voices of others and sounds of nature, including many things in the iCloud!

From sunrise to sunset is important to me. There are days that appear to be too short, although the rotation of the sun and the moon haven’t changed much over the last few million years. I remember when my days as a youth were much too long, and I couldn’t wait for the sun to set. What a difference a day makes as we age even though days are still twenty-four hours.

Will I leave a proud legacy for my adult children and grandchildren? Will my footprints be lightweight or leave deep impressions in the earth? What about the accumulation of “stuff” that seems to be never ending even though I try to thin out my closets and drawers and storage unit every month?

There’s so much beauty to behold from sunrise to sunset. The transition from season to season brings new life above ground and joins seasoned life with the earth ensuring a richer and healthier soil for future growth.

As of today, I have experienced 24,254 sunrises and 24,253 sunsets. I pray that each sunrise to sunset will be more meaningful than the one before. Sunrise to sunset means a lot to me.