

# **Sylvia's Story**

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## **Part 1 – Sylvia's Salvation**

January 26th, 2008

It's with tears of sadness and joy that I write this report.

I got a late night summons to go to the hospital to come to the bedside of one of my dear Jewish contacts named Sylvia. A few of you may recall praying for Sylvia a year or so ago, when she broke her back. Sylvia had to have two emergency surgeries yesterday, and things did not go in her favor. The family, who all do not know Jesus yet miraculously asked for me to come to her bedside.

I spent about 35 minutes with Sylvia early this morning. I was left alone with her in ICU, the whole time I was visiting. I was able to communicate with her, through eye blinks and hand squeezes. I knew that this was likely to be the last time I would see her or have the chance to share Jesus with Sylvia one last time...I felt a great haste and urgency in my spirit.

I pulled out my Bible and read scriptures to Sylvia. I explained to her again why Jesus, her Messiah came to provide atonement for her sins and mine. A few times, Sylvia opened her eyes and I could look into them.....some of the time, her eyes were closed and tears would squeeze out and run down her cheeks. She would respond to me, and so, together we prayed for her sins to be forgiven....washed clean with the blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Sylvia could not respond with a voice, because of all the tubes running down her nose and throat...but, she could respond with her eyes...and squeezing my hand. I came to a sense of peace that she was ready to go home and see Her Messiah face to face.

Please join us in rejoicing for her soul being saved for eternity, and join us in prayer for her family who do not know Jesus yet...that this tragedy will draw them to their Messiah. Pray actually that Sylvia could become healed and be with us for a little while longer, and be an example to her son and daughter-in-law. Pray that somehow, in all of this sadness, that the Lord could use me to minister to Sylvia's family.

Sylvia has been one of our Shalom Basket contacts for about the last 4 years. The Lord used her Christian friend who sent her a basket faithfully year after year, to bring Jesus into Sylvia's life, before the end.

It's been an emotionally draining night and morning. But, I rejoice and thank God that Sylvia knows her Jesus, and that she will meet Him face to face with great joy.

Bless you all and thank you for loving us,  
Casey

## **Part 2 – Sylvia's Death**

January 31, 2008

Sylvia was taken off life support early yesterday evening and died a short time after. Her funeral is tomorrow. Pray that I can be a comfort to her son and daughter-in-law, if they will let me. Everyone is quite distraught. Thanks.

### **Part 3 – Sylvia's Funeral**

February 4, 2008

On Thursday, Murray sent out a beautiful email letting everyone know that Sylvia had gone on to be with Jesus. I have heard from many of you wanting to know more and offering to pray for her son, Neil. I wanted to give you a glimpse inside Sylvia's funeral, so you'd see what I saw....and know what we are up against.

Sylvia was taken off life support later Wednesday, and she died a short time afterwards.

Jewish tradition requires a burial within a very short time, so she was laid to rest on Friday in a brief graveside ceremony. Friday dawned gray and bleak. The funeral was equally gray and bleak. Inside, I knew and was rejoicing over Sylvia's transition from her sick bed straight into the arms of Her Messiah....but this news would not be welcome at her funeral....in fact....it would make their grieving much worse in their mind's eye.

I have to say that this was the most incredibly hopeless funeral I have ever attended. The outside weather was a picture perfect example of their inside despair. We were positioned on a slippery hill, made muddy and treacherous because of the rain....literally some of the chairs were nearly horizontal. I decided to stand in the back ( knowing my penchant for mishaps, there was no way I was going to sit in one of the chairs!!!) in the cold drizzle with Sylvia's Christian friend, who had faithfully sent her those Shalom Baskets over the years. We were the only two rejoicing.

It was definitely a proper Jewish burial. All the rituals were observed right down to the tearing of garments in grief. The rabbi mercifully provided little pre-bagged ribbons for those who did not wish to literally tear their nice garments. That seemed sad to me....I know it's practical and I'm sure very sensible and tradition as well....but it made the outward display of their grief seem equally pre-packaged in a way. I'm not saying that to sound judgmental....just a quiet musing on the situation.

There was no talk of heaven. There were no comforting words on how Sylvia was better off in her new home or how we would one day join her in Glory. Instead we shoveled dirt onto her coffin in turn....because that was all there was. That is all there is. We will go into the cold ground and be covered up with the dirt. From the rabbi's message, Sylvia's best deed was serving Shabbat dinner for her family....which is nice....but she was so much more than that.

I wanted to shout from the rooftops that there is hope....there is more....but it just wasn't possible. Perhaps I should have thrown caution and respect for their grief to the wind and done it anyway....but I did not. It would not have been appropriate. Instead I wept for them and prayed for them.

Neil, Sylvia's son, was the only family member who was pleased to see me. I've been sort of a back-up for him when he has health needs....to take him to the doctor if no one else could. He was clinging to me with tears, telling me how glad he was I had come....how much Sylvia talked about and loved me. He looked into my eyes....I could see and feel his desperation. I told him to not lose my number....I would be there for him and his family....I would be there. I pray for many more opportunities to minister to Sylvia....through ministering to her son. I would like to be a part of seeing that they will meet again one day with Jesus.

It would be an amazing blessing and a wonderful legacy if a whole family could become saved because of the death of a beautiful woman like Sylvia....join us in praying for that?

We see through a glass dimly....our Sylvia now sees everything crystal clear....what we know in part....she knows in full....and for that, I am so thankful. I'm so very thankful.

Blessings,  
Casey