

A Quiet Celebration

Some time ago I told the story of Donna, (not her real name), and how she came to faith in Christ. Donna gave us an assignment that we pray she would die soon. Well, we did pray and the Lord heard our prayers.

I received a phone call one Friday morning from the nursing staff that Donna wished to see me immediately. The staff explained that she had only hours to live.

I decided to go that afternoon as our car was in for repairs that morning. Susan urged me to find a way to go immediately, so I made arrangements to go within the hour to the nursing home.

When I arrived, Donna was conscious and knew me. I spoke to her about her favourite view of Christ.

A few weeks earlier, after she had confessed faith in Christ, I shared with her how the Good Shepherd goes before the sheep so that where ever they walk, the shepherd has walked before them.

She loved the idea that Jesus was just a step ahead of her in her pilgrimage.

That morning I reminded her gently of how the Saviour was just in front of her and

would guide her every step of the way home.

She quietly whispered, "Soon, soon." By that she meant that she wanted to be taken soon to be with Him. I assured her that He would soon take her and then prayed for mercy to be shown her by the Lord. She seemed peaceful and comforted by our words and prayer.

An hour after I left her room, the Saviour embraced her in death and she was at peace. How glad I was that Susan had prevailed with me to go immediately rather than wait until the afternoon.

A few days later the funeral home called me to request that I do a committal service. They explained that because there were no close relatives, the family had dispensed with a funeral service and only wished a committal service at the grave.

The distant relatives did not think they would be present but wished me to perform that function on their behalf. I happily agreed to render this service for them.

A few days later my wife and I along with the funeral director, a cemetery official and a VON nurse that had attended Donna before she had to

leave her apartment and go to Ian Anderson House, gathered at the grave side for the brief meeting.

It seemed so sad and lonely to think that this dear one was being given such a simple departure from our midst. No relatives, no old friends, no sunshine, just the stream of Tuesday morning traffic and five strangers. Yet, there was a note of joy in our voices as we read the Scriptures and prayed there in the cemetery that cool fall day.

Donna's departure from this world was only noted by five people, but her reception in heaven was attended by joyful celebration of all the heavenly host as she entered the presence of her newly discovered Saviour. What a difference between Donna's reality and ours.

We were joyfully saddened by this quiet celebration of a life lived, but the Lord knows why He allowed such an event to go unnoticed by the busy world that autumn day in the peacefulness of the cemetery.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

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