

Pam Butterworth Remembers Ivy Pain

My first memory of Ivy was when I was a young teenager and I was sent to the under 7s department upstairs to be a Sunday school teacher –Ivy was in charge. In fact, for years Ivy always seemed to look after the young children. If a child or baby cried in the service, Ivy would go to the rescue and take the child out – I think whether the parent wanted her to or not!. So many people said – Ivy looked after my children when I was struggling, or when I was a child Ivy looked after me. Elaine said “Ivy looked after my boys” and so Elaine was very happy to visit Ivy and they would look at maps to identify where different people were. Mary said “Ivy was like my second mum” and so was thrilled to try and help Ivy when she was frail. Penny took Catherine over to Ivy when Catherine would not stop crying - Paul and Penny regularly picked Ivy up for church in latter days. One lady who has recently joined The Tuesday Fellowship asked if the “Ivy Pain” that we pray for and mention is the same Ivy Pain that was involved in the Friendship Circle years ago – yes, that was Ivy.

My next memory of Ivy was when we had a special mission week for children with a visiting evangelist in 1966. I remember my dad telling me that Ivy’s husband had died very suddenly. Paul remembers Miss Busby, the headmistress, telling the school and helping them know how to be good friends to Ivy’s children, Joyce and David. Ivy has testified to that time, how the Lord helped her. How it was good having Carolyn as a toddler as it meant that Ivy had to keep going on and cope with life.

Ivy also testified that from that time on, the Lord brought people across her path that needed her. Ivy mentioned John who came for lodgings as he taught at the Grammar School and stayed all his school career and kept in touch – I am sure he must be here today. Just last year, we could get no response from Ivy to take her to Tuesday Fellowship. I went round afterwards, expecting to find her asleep in bed – no, she had gone out for lunch with John.

Ivy loved to share news of her grandchildren and showed us their prayer letters. She was so happy at each bit of family news – and so pleased for David getting married and finding happiness. She loved each of her family and was so proud of each one.

I mentioned that Ivy said the Lord sent people to her. Only the Lord knows how many people, especially the elderly, that Ivy helped – some that were neighbours, some that were church people. Ivy was so faithful to Molly and Arch Eames. Ivy would go and read with someone, help them with practical issues or do whatever was needed. It was Ivy that noticed John Green had gone missing and it was discovered he was collapsed on the floor at home, needing hospital treatment.

Gary Benfold, a previous pastor here said of Ivy,

“Ivy was a precious soul, and I've many happy memories of her. She was a real saint; I once said to her 'You know, if we had women deacons, you'd be the first' and she was really surprised, too humble to recognise the value of how much she did... Gary adds... (We should have gone ahead and appointed her, I think!)”

Ivy, along with Molly Eames and Renee Fuller, looked after the Women’s Fellowship for many years _ I think it started in Mrs Dinham’s days in the 60s – it was still going, but down to 10 or 12 when Pat and Alan came to Limes Avenue Baptist Church in 2007. Ivy was afraid that if she gave up it would not continue. Ivy and Renee allowed Pat to take over – but I doubt if they realised how

much it would change. It is a great tribute to Ivy, Renee and Pat that not only did Ivy and Renee cope with the change, but they were excited and thrilled with the new Tuesday Fellowship and entered in wholeheartedly. Jenny remembers how Ivy would keep bringing the milk for the tea, even when she was so frail - Ivy turned down any offer of a lift – I can walk! Ivy kept fit by walking everywhere she possibly could as long as she possibly could.

Frances remembers that when Ivy came into church you would see her looking round for a seat – not looking for someone she felt safe with – but next to someone who was alone or new. Dorothy remembers that Ivy never missed a birthday – just 13 months ago I found her wandering along Craigwell Avenue – by then we were giving her lifts everywhere as she was quite frail. I picked her up and said “where are you off to Ivy?” She said “It says in my book that it is your birthday” – she had managed to struggle out to deliver my card – with a street plan in case she got lost!

Ivy was determined to keep coming to all the meetings. One dark wintery night I rang her to say I thought the weather was too icy and misty for her to come out for the 7.45 meeting - Ivy looked out the window and said “well there are cars going up and down!” Ivy took her duties as a church member so very seriously – even to voting early this year.

Ivy knew age was catching up on her and she often said so. Elsie Dear tells how Ivy shared her fears of aging with her – “what will happen?” At first Ivy declined help, but then so graciously accepted it. I loved the way she would say “thank you for looking after me” – when maybe all we had done was given her a lift home. One or two suggestions of making life easier for her were offered and Ivy would say “if you think it would help me”. When she eventually allowed her daughters to organise carers, Ivy said how helpful the carers were. There was something very lovely about Ivy’s recognition and acceptance of her frailty and I grew very fond of her.

Ivy so valued the visits of her children to help care for her and organise the things that she could no longer cope with. Ivy was always so proud of her family. She was proud of the care they gave her and how she knew they would organise matters.

When Ivy was in Amersham hospital I asked her what hymn she liked. After a while thinking she said “God moves in a mysterious way” and we sang it together – we sang it in her memory at Tuesday Fellowship this week. As we look back over Ivy’s life, it is not difficult to understand that choice of hymn – Ivy herself testified to God’s keeping through tragedy – of the joy her three children and grandchildren brought to her as they served the Lord – we see the provision that Ivy was to the elderly, to struggling mothers and to young children. God indeed moves in mysterious ways. Now Ivy has received that “Well done, good and faithful servant”. We could do with a dozen new Ivys at Limes Avenue.