

Memories of Sandfields by Bethan Lloyd-Jones, Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, PA 2008 (4 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. The Church Prayer Meeting.

The Church Prayer Meeting was held on Monday evenings at 7 o'clock. After a year or two it was always well attended, usually somewhere between 200 and 300 people present.

The Minister would ask some one to begin with Bible reading and prayer. After a hymn, the meeting would be “open”—no one was ever called or invited to pray. Doctor [Lloyd-Jones] felt that the Holy Spirit would inspire and prompt, if we were humble and expectant. If he sensed a break after about half or three-quarters of an hour, he would give out a hymn, and then resume the meeting, and again bring it to a close in another half hour or so, when silence fell—always allowing a few minutes for the nervous or hesitant, in case they really wanted to pray. [page 9]

2. Fellowship Problems and Questions Discussed.

The Fellowship Meeting was held on Wednesday nights, and again, the hall was always well filled. Doctor [Lloyd-Jones] would call someone to open the meeting with a hymn, reading, and prayer. Then he would ask if any had a question or problem they would like to discuss. “Has anyone an experience to tell, or a question to ask, or a problem to discuss?”, would be the usual words to open the discussion. Often the first offered would not encourage discussion, and he might himself give a brief answer and ask for other questions.

In this meeting he would not accept a purely theological question. This meeting must always deal with problems that affected Christian life and living. Once a question on these lines was asked, he would accept it for discussion, and sitting back in his chair, he would say: “Well, what do you say to that?” Often he would open the question out to embrace a wide spectrum of related issues, and then guide the discussion through an hour, or an hour and a half, of points raised, thoughts shared, answers proffered, Scripture quoted.

It was fascinating to see a whole congregation learning to think and weigh and attack a problem or question logically and biblically. [page 14]

3. Those with Strong Opinions.

Now and again, in our Church meetings, there would be some very humorous interludes, and one thing always amused those of us who were hearers rather than talkers. Someone with strong opinions would rise to his feet and give an opinion in no uncertain terms, speaking perhaps a little dictatorially or dogmatically, and then as he was lowering himself back into his seat, the Doctor [Lloyd-Jones] would say, “Oh, Mr ..., just a minute”, in the mildest way, and the poor man would find himself back on his feet and having to give reasonable, factual or biblical explanations of some of his original statements. What always caused the hidden smile and knowing look on the part of the congregation, was the look – the hunted look -- on the man’s face, when he realized that he could not get away with merely delivering a speech!

At the end of the discussion, Doctor would take ten or fifteen minutes to draw the threads together and sum up. Many would have liked to shorten the discussion and lengthen the summary! But he knew what was good for us and turned a stubbornly deaf ear to such suggestions! [page 15]

4. Sunday School Sessions.

The Sunday School was well-attended and lively, and like all Welsh Sunday Schools in those days, the ages ranged from babyhood well into the eighties. Doctor [Lloyd-Jones] took the men’s class, numbering between thirty and forty men of all ages. Mr Millard took the older women’s class, while I had a class of young women with ages ranging from about eighteen to thirty. It was a new experience for me, but I found myself loving every minute of it. The girls really wanted to learn, they were not being forced in any way, they came of their own free will.

We chose our book for study, and then we went through it verse by verse. After reading a paragraph or passage – reading verse by verse in turn – each member was encouraged to start us off by asking a question on her verse. They would all talk and discuss and ask and answer questions freely. The

time flew by. For some of them it was nothing new, they had always been to Sunday School from their childhood; but for others, newly awakened to spiritual things, it was a new world and they were enjoying having to think.
[pages 23-24]