



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

### A Tribute to Mrs Anne Ferguson

Given by Rev Ivan Foster at her funeral service in Lurgan Free Presbyterian Church, August 14th, 2018, when some 600 people gathered to sympathise with and support Rev Gordon Ferguson and his family in their bereavement.



**A photograph of Anne taken in June of this year**

I am not a member of Anne Ferguson's family. However, we were both members of a family God gathered unto Himself in a time of rich blessing in the mid-60s down in Co. Fermanagh.

Anne was saved on 27th April 1969. That Sabbath evening was my first in the Lisbellaw pulpit following a month-long prison term in Crumlin Road jail.

Anne worked in a ladies drapery in Enniskillen. She lived in flat nearby to two other girls, Mabel Howe, now Mrs Mabel Beattie, and Evelyn Bradshaw, now Mrs Ferguson, a sister-in-law to Anne.

Both of these girls were Christians and they attended the meetings in Lisbellaw. They had witnessed to Anne and she attended the meetings with them. That last Sabbath evening in April, she sought and found the Lord

after returning to her flat from the evening gospel meeting. She told me the next evening at a protest rally in Enniskillen.

She immediately became involved in the gospel work in Lisbellaw, participating in the children's outreach and the young people's fellowship.

It was there that she met Gordon. They were married in March 1971. I have always honoured both her and Gordon for getting married in the wee tin hut in Lisbellaw. Many other girls would have looked for somewhere more glamorous. For them both, that little hall was God's house for there He had met them both and blessed them richly.

I must mention Anne's personality. She had a most winning way with her and her smile was delightful. It was said to me by a friend in England when I sent word of her passing, "she was a most humble and pleasant lady". I think that was the impression of all who met her.

Of course, she was also a strong witness for the Lord and His truth wherever she went. That may be seen in her attaching herself to the Lisbellaw fellowship, which had a reputation of being strong in its opposition to the sins and ecumenical trends of the day. It was seen also in her life as a minister's wife. She supported Gordon most faithfully in his pastorates in Ulster and also in London.

Anne was a good Christian mother. That is seen in the family she has left behind. Remember what the Lord says: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. . . . She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her," Proverbs 31:10, 27-28.

It is fitting that I read out to you at this juncture a word of tribute from her children.

"Our Mum and Dad have always been a shining example of Christian love for us and for our Saviour. We never went to bed without family devotions, many times by Mum in Dads absence with church duties.

Her loss will leave a hole which will never be filled on earth. We just want to take a moment to thank Dad and pay tribute to him for his love and selfless care for Mum during her illness. It was always a source of humour to mum how pleased he was with his efforts to cook for her. We share his pain and loss and will be ever more needful of his wise counsel in the coming days. Whilst we are happy for Mum to be at peace and



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with her Saviour we will miss her greatly.”

Anne was a woman of prayer. Many are in Christ today as a result of her faithful petitions. I know she would wish me to say to those not yet in Christ and for whom she prayed: “Do you not think that her passing is yet another warning, another call to you to get right with God?”

When it became known that she was suffering from cancer there was a deep-felt sorrow went through the Free Presbyterian Church. In Kilskeery, where she was well known and loved, there were many conversations about her and her delightful ways. One of my sons made mention of her kindness and readiness to speak to him at a time when the name “Foster” may not have been too popular.

Such was the character of Anne Ferguson. My own wife said when we conversed about Anne’s passing. “You cannot speak too highly of Anne. She never changed!” This is a changing world and many professing Christians today do not stand where once they stood but not so Anne Ferguson. She was faithful to the end!

I know that Gordon and the family will miss her to a degree which cannot be fully shared by those outside the family but let me say to them that there are many of us who will never forget Anne and her walk and the witness of her humble, godly life.

A full recording of the funeral service can be heard **here**.



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