

Remembering Sara

What a privilege it is to be asked by pastor and the family to share a few words about Sara. There's a lot to be said in a little amount of time.

For anyone who spent more than 30 seconds with her, you knew the essence of her life's mission. She cared so much that it went beyond giving ... she really SHARED everything with us. I use sharing instead of giving because giving implies ownership ... I have, so I give. Yet in spending time with Sara (and Larry) over the last twenty years, I always came away convinced that they believed everything they had was God's and it was merely on loan to them. They were just stewards of their time, talents and treasures and they shared all of them with us.

She certainly shared amazingly with me and my family, particularly when projects were starting. Whether it was Young Life in the early and mid 80's, my wife's and my mission work or when Nehemiah was starting up in the 90's, I could tell that she truly cared about kids and Christ and wanted to see those two meet more than anyone I have ever met.

And I knew she was praying for me and many of us. A couple of years ago we were talking about this with respect to the "throw away" kids in our culture that are in juvenile detention. She asked, "Has anyone ever consistently prayed for these kids by name?" I guessed not, and then she had the idea to organize a group of folks to do just that. What a brilliant idea! We had the first names of 25 kids the first go around and I think 20 of them never made it back to the courts. Sara knew only God could change people ... it was our job to share God's love with them. (And we know that we can't change people as well, particularly those of us who are married.)

You see, Sara knew that it was her job to share the nature of God and His love as it overflowed in her to as many people as possible. And sometimes that love was tough. She'd remind me when I was getting a little carried away with things of when she made bread as a little girl and how important it was to stay grounded, to remember humble beginnings and to hold onto the values and beliefs that would carry me through the peaks and valleys of life.

Those beliefs and values have affected every one of us here today. I would ask for help ... do any of us have a clue how many people she "shared" with without them even asking? The answer is none of us have a clue because she did so much of it ... except for you, Larry. I'm guessing you knew about most of it anyway.

She was so tuned in and sensitized to people's needs. She'd call me and say that she and Larry had been talking (and again my guess, Larry is that you were a good listener) and that a need was made known to them and they didn't want anyone to know that they were helping and would I help deliver a check or some goods or something and I'd sit there and think "this woman and God are onto something" and I better just get with the program and do what she says. And if there was any hesitation on my part, she would just respond in that sweet voice and say, "Honey, I think we should do this" ... and then mysteriously my hesitation would go away. For me, as for most of us, it's God speaks and we obey. There were more than a few times when I thought in Sara's case it might be she speaking and God obeying.

It's an awesome thing to know what your life's mission is. How about you? Do you know what your life's mission is? What is your purpose for living? For Sara, she shared ... and the only way she discovered that is by committed her life fully to Jesus Christ and became an expert in sharing His love to thousands of people ... one life at a time ... because of her relationship with Him. Do you have an active, living relationship with Jesus Christ? She did ... and she truly lived a life God rewards, one where Jesus encourages us to not store up for ourselves treasures on Earth where moths and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for ourselves treasures in Heaven.

Sara always spoke to me in plain, understandable stories and analogies, and so to close my time I wanted to share one with you that I believe ties much of this together. It's called "Go ahead and eat your baloney sandwich". READ STORY

We're grieving today individually and as a community. But Sara would want so much more for each of us. I think she'd want us to trade in our baloney sandwiches for His chicken. You know what ... I think God might just go along with that as well.

- Wally Martinson
Executive Director of Nehemiah Foundation