

FATHER AND FAITH

By Bill Pugh



As a child, around dusk, I wandered up the hallway of our home and looked up through the glass panelling above the front door. It was my first conscious experience of night.

This was my first experience of apprehension. Then, in spite of the usual scrapes, all things were as day. Now there was dark and night.

In bed alone one night I woke, suddenly frightened, a sense of the unknown. I got up and stood outside my parents' bedroom, not making a sound. But dad woke up, gave me a smile, took my hand and led me back to my own bed, and sat with me, holding my hand until I fell asleep.

In the morning it was light, the family was in the kitchen having breakfast and dad was about to go to work. All was well.

I have never forgotten that night and the father who held my hand. Dad was a WWI Digger, gassed and wounded. After the war he tried farming, which did not work.

He went back to banking and managed a Primary Producers Bank, which failed in the Depression.

The family moved into our grandparents' home and Mum looked after them.

Dad experienced the darkness, yet he was always of good cheer. He was always there for us, five kids. A swim, a treat on the bus to Mentone Beach, goal umpire at our football games.

In spite of life's deals, he got on with it. Dad made the most of the light of each day. When we were down he would say, *"Keep yourself bright"*. He was always the encourager.

I reckon my first seed of tentative faith began then. We never called him father, simply a very personal Dad.

He helped me to understand something of what Jesus meant when, in his lonely and darkest Gethsemane, he prayed and reached out to his father calling him ABBA, a very personal and intimate word which means My Father.

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