

btw is the acronym for "by the Way (Jesus)." It sets the tone for the current issue.



The Gift of Family By Shari Miller

Our children would return from college, burst through the door, and exuberantly shout: "It was such a long trip. It's good to be home."

Home is the place where family is. As God's own dearly loved children through Baptism by the power of the Spirit, we have faith in our Savior Jesus Christ and all that He accomplished for us through His perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection. As daughters and sons of the King, we are forgiven and free to live as brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus promises in Matthew 18:20: "*For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.*" What a gift to be in the family of God!

We are gifted with faith and we want to pass that legacy of faith on to those we love. Paul speaks to Timothy: *I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well* (2 Timothy 1:3). Lois and Eunice are a model for those in the family of God — sharing the faith with those we love and celebrating our new life in Christ.

When we have disappointments or failures in life, the family of God loves, consoles, bolsters, encourages, and forgives one another. Paul exhorts us: *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony* (Colossians 3:12–14).

How can you serve in the family of God? Jesus says in Matthew 20:26b–28: "*But whoever would*

be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." The reason for our service is our Servant-Savior Jesus. His love motivates us by the power of the Spirit to serve those in the family of God and beyond.

We can share the Good News with those we meet while on our errands. We can cheerfully serve the homeless and others in need by providing physical and spiritual help and resources. We can mentor newer members of God's family and help them feel at home. We might open our homes to small group Bible study, as the Holy Spirit builds faith through the Word. We are privileged to identify areas of service and then fill that niche with our God-given talents and abilities. What's on your "to-do" list today?

The family of God hopes for an eternal home and celebration. Through him [Jesus] we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:2). Jesus promises to take us home to live with Him forever.

Home is the place where family is. As God's dear children because of Jesus, we anticipate the day when we can burst through the door of death, stand before the Lamb, and exuberantly shout: "It's good to be home!" **Q**

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