

Grandparenting in the Midst of Transition **by Charme Fletcher**

It will be three years ago this coming December that we watched our first and only (to this point) granddaughter be born into the world. Oh, what joy and love filled that birthing room! My husband and I had the wonderful privilege of being beside our daughter as she gave birth to Ella Grace.

My husband, being a pastor, had received the call from me early Sunday morning, telling him that our daughter had gone into labor and that it was time for him to come to the hospital. Since he was three hours away from where our daughter lived, he immediately made the necessary phone calls to supply his pulpit, and then hopped in the car and drove up to begin his designated assignment of video-taping the birth. Life became very different for us after Ella arrived. Let's say, this is where the transition began.

Our daughter, a single mother, invited me to stay with her and Ella for a few weeks while they got adjusted. This was such a special time for me, as I not only was able to watch my daughter care for and nurture her new little one, but I too, was able to experience a deep bond with Ella. Being a restless newborn, we spent many hours bouncing and rocking our precious gift from God, reassuring her of our love. I was so blessed to be able to whisper the name of Jesus into her little ears and to pray over her as she quieted in my arms.

After returning to my home in Camdenton, Missouri, and reassuming my role as the pastor's wife, I began to really miss that new granddaughter of ours. So, I began to pray, "Lord, if it be your will, I sure would like to be closer to Ella and be able to watch her grow up, and to help nurture her spiritual growth." I truly left this prayer in God's hands.

After about a year and half later, my husband began to sense that he was being released from his current ministry assignment and we began to pray for God's direction. Not wanting to put God in a box, we sent out resumes to three different parts of the country, including one in the Kansas City area where our daughter and Ella lived. Several months passed and no word on any pastoral assignments. Then, almost two years after Ella's birth, we received a call to interview at a church close to Kansas City. God had closed the other two doors, but had opened the one closest to our granddaughter. My prayer had been answered! After interviewing, we realized that God was definitely calling us to the new church, and this is where our transition continues.

With a home still to sell in Camdenton, we have been living with our grown daughter and Ella for the past five months. Boy, did God answer my prayers! It has been interesting indeed, living literally out of suitcases while settling into our new church – not to mention starting two new jobs. But, through it all, I know God has placed my husband and me in their home for this season.

I would like to share just a few of the God-given blessings I have experienced during this transition in our lives. One of my favorite times is taking strolls with Ella. As we walk, we talk about all the beautiful creation that God has made. From infancy I would ask her, "Ella, who made the trees, or the bunny rabbits, or the blue sky above?" And now as we walk along the road, Ella (at 2 1/2 years of age) will say, "Nana, God made the birds, God made the grass and the butterfly." You see, I made a promise to God, (and to her mother and family), that I would tell her about Jesus, teach her God's Word, and pray for her soul to be saved at an early age. This is my passion and my commitment to our Heavenly Father.

"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children (grandchildren). Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." - Deuteronomy 6:6-7, NIV

There is more to our story that is unfolding even as I am writing this article. Several weeks ago Ella's mother noticed a sizable lump under her chin. She is now going through tests to determine what it is and the cause. During one special moment while I was getting ready for work, my

daughter and Ella were laying across the bed. I asked my daughter how she was feeling. Immediately, my granddaughter looked at me and said, "Nana, mommy's chin hurts, we need to pray for her." My heart and her mother's heart melted at those words from this little girl. Ella then said, "You pray Nana." So, we all held hands and I prayed. Then, as soon as I finished praying, Ella, said, "Now, I want to pray for mommy." She prayed the most precious prayer. I believe God is answering this prayer in ways much higher than mine.

Yes, it has been a bit unnerving at times to be in transition with our move to the new church and living with our grown daughter. Yet, I believe God is working in ways that will bring Him much glory, and will also bring lasting spiritual fruit in the lives of my daughter and granddaughter. Our house finally sold and we will move into our new home in the month of September. Ella is so excited, because she knows that as soon as Pappy and Nana move into their home she will have a new swing set to play on in their back yard!

I praise God for the blessing of being a mother of three wonderful children, and now, a Nana to our precious Ella Grace.

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