

## **Day to Day, Let Us Pray**

When our children were young my wife Kathy and I took a number of summers and worked on our master's degrees in family ministry from Regis University in Denver. Toward the end of one of these summer sessions we were invited to a community pool near a friend's house.

Our middle daughter Naomi has always been a great swimmer. From her baths as an infant through parent-tot swim classes, and on to the high school swim team, Naomi has always loved the water. So when she heard we were to spend an afternoon at a pool, she was elated.

I was in the water with my youngest daughter MacKenzie, who was a toddler at the time. Naomi was diving off the high dive, something she did very well. Occasionally, I would look up to see how Naomi was doing. She was wearing a red swimsuit so she was easy to spot. I took my gaze away for a moment and then returned my sight to the high dive. Naomi wasn't diving. Instead there was a red crumpled form on the pavement near the dive.

It took me a moment to realize what had happened. Naomi had fallen from the high dive. I quickly gave MacKenzie to Kathy and rushed to Naomi's side. Her face was swollen and bloody. She had an obvious compound fracture of her arm. The arm went in five different directions at once. It was a very frightening scene.

The first thing that came into my mind came from my Boy Scout training. I yelled to have someone call 911 and knelt down next to Naomi to block her vision so she couldn't see her arm. I remembered that people could go into shock when they view their own serious injury. The next thing I did was to start praying. I would say a soothing and comforting sentence to Naomi and then pray. That went on for over twenty minutes. It seemed like hours. I must have told Naomi five hundred times how much I loved her and how much Jesus loved her. And Naomi stayed still and calm.

When the ambulance arrived the emergency professional took over, and they did a wonderful job. I rode with Naomi to the hospital, praying all the way. The closest hospital happened to be a Catholic hospital. That was a huge comfort. While Naomi was in surgery I sat in the waiting room and contemplated the crucifix that hung on the wall. I knew then that Jesus had suffered; Jesus knew what it was like; Jesus was with Naomi; Jesus was with me. It was a transforming experience.

After surgery the doctor told us that Naomi's arm was put back together the best that they could and that the damage to her face was not as bad as it looked. But the arm may have some permanent disfigurement. That night I stayed in Naomi's hospital room. Naomi woke up at about two in the morning. The nurses came in and said Naomi was doing fine. And to my surprise, Naomi wanted to talk.

She asked me many questions. I answered the questions honestly. Then we both focused on the crucifix in her hospital room. We talked about Jesus' sufferings; we talked about Jesus' empathy; we talked about Jesus' love.

And almost unbelievably, with a smile on her swollen face, Naomi fell back to sleep. And I prayed the night away.

We later flew Naomi to a hospital closer to home, and she was to go on to completely recover. But I have never forgotten that night of prayer, the conversation with my daughter, or those crucifixes. And I have since thanked God many, many times for the great gift of prayer.

And I learned a lesson too. We can't leave family prayer for just emergency times. Prayer has to be a part of our daily family lives. Then, when trouble arrives, as it always does, prayer becomes a natural response. And the power of family prayer is then recognized and realized by all involved. As families, day to day, let us pray. Then we will know in our very hearts and souls, for sure, no matter what tragedies we may face, Jesus is with us and Jesus loves us.

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