

Gratitude at the holidays

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

We had Christmas dinner at the Toddle House. That's like a White Castle without booths.

Whenever I think of the holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas, I think of that dinner and how grateful we were.

My parents had separated. We were homeless for a short time until friends loaned us an empty house. Relatives donated furniture. Nothing fancy, but we had beds and chairs and a table. That was October. Right after Thanksgiving, we were lovingly told we had to find our own place. The house had sold.

Mom had been praying this entire time. She prayed with James 4:8 "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you . . ." Not pleading with God to do something, but the prayer of praise. Knowing that the nature of God is good and that God naturally provides good for His children. She prayed to know God had a place for us. She prayed to see God's guidance to that place. This is drawing nigh to God.

And her prayer included listening. Prayer is listening to God, listening for His thoughts or angel messages, and then obeying them. "We have to do our part," she told me. Listening for God's thought and obeying them is doing our part.

She found a job, but still no one would rent to her. Because of us, two small children. I don't know if she thought about these verses in John, but they communicate the substance of her prayer during those days. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:1,2)

There was never a doubt in my Mother's mind that there was a place for us, that God had prepared a place for us. And she found it. A small but nice apartment she could afford in a duplex. We went to see it Christmas Day. We were so excited. She was so grateful. It was our gift from God. There were no other presents that day. There didn't need to be. This was the gift that we needed the most. And we celebrated by having Christmas dinner out. . . at the Toddle House.

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