



Dear Prayer Partner,

As a monthly financial contributor to (or a board member of) the Sharing Org I consider you to be one of our partners in this ministry. By your participation you are communicating that you have a deep commitment to taking the Gospel of our Lord to the residents of care facilities and that you are committed to the mission of providing weekly worship services for those who cannot get out of their homes to attend a local church. For this reason, in addition to your monthly prayer letter, I will be including additional details about the ministry in order to give you a fuller view of how the Sharing Org touches the lives of the people that we serve. In doing so I hope that you will gain a deeper understanding of how you are a part of a powerful and meaningful ministry that loves people who are often overlooked in our society.

Sela and I walked up to the casket and we stood silently looking at the shell of a woman that had attended our very first service on Sept. 7, 2003. I asked Sela if she remembered Grandma Joyce and she nodded her head. We stood there looking for a few moments longer, and I asked her if she would pray with me. She folded her little hands and bowed her head as I said a few words of thanks - *Thanks for the privilege of having known Grandma Joyce, thanks for allowing us to have served her these last few years of her life, thanks that we have the faith to entrust her now to Jesus.* When we were finished we said our final good-byes as I told Sela that Grandma Joyce was now with God.

Grandma Joyce was one of the rare characters in our services. She had a sharp mind and came into her faith only after she had moved into the nursing home. She was full of questions and wonder about so many things, it was fun to see her excitement for Jesus. She was a lot of fun in services, too, because she did not seem to understand that rhetorical questions during a message were not necessarily intended to spark discussions right then and there.

When Sela was born, we passed Sela around to all of the residents at the nursing home so that

they could meet her and hold her. When I got to Grandma Joyce, she did not readily accept the baby. When I asked her if she wanted to hold the baby, she said that she was not sure that she should because her Parkinson's made her so shaky. I assured her that the baby would think of it as "rocking" and be perfectly pleased by it. Grandma Joyce held Sela in her shaking arms and wept as she told me that it had been 30 years since she had last held an infant.

Grandma Joyce was a regular at our services for better than three years. She got sick about three months ago and became very confused and didn't recognize us anymore. It was sad to see her deteriorating, but I am so very happy to have had the opportunity to know and love her during these final years of her life. I have pictures and memories that I will cherish for the rest of my days.

As Sela and I walked out to our car, she grabbed my hand and said "Dad? Where is God?" I told her that God was in heaven and that seemed to be good enough for her. It will not be too long before Sela has no more recollection of Grandma Joyce, but I hope that the deeply important lesson of learning how to say "good-bye" to those who pass from this world will be with my daughter for the rest of her life.

~John