

I recently returned back to Arizona from a trip to Iowa. Our daughter, Rachel, and I drove back to Graceland University for her to report for pre-season volleyball. We had a very good trip, with no problems! The weather cooperated, her car ran well, we had no road issues. Rachel and I had a wonderful time together as we made the trip, driving straight through!

Our first destination was Des Moines, where we stayed with our son, Matt. As always, it is a blessing to spend time together with our family, although it was only 3 of us. (John stayed home this trip to hold down the fort). While in Des Moines, we were able to meet up with extended family members. John's sister was helping our nephew and wife move to Michigan and they stopped to camp outside of Des Moines. So the 6 of us were able to share a meal together at the KOA campsite nearby. It has been rare that the cousins were able to spend much time together. What a blessing to share together with family! Also, our Phoenix friends and Rachel's volleyball teammate (Rachel Chavez and parents Ron and Brenda) joined us for tasty lunch in Des Moines on Saturday.

Upon arrival to Graceland, Rachel and I were greeted by many very familiar faces that added to the blessings we experience. Jayne Welch was at the dorm desk, Sara Peck (has be a GU Rep at camps) met us at the car with a golf cart to load up Rachel's belongings and get them to the dorm, Brickell Dotson was walking by so I stole a quick hug from her and Mike Hoffman happened to help Rachel's roommate by carrying some of her belongings into their room. Special hugs from all were cherished. Ron and Brenda 'babysat' me while the girls reported to volleyball; which allowed us to enjoy time together in Lamoni and do a Walmart run for the girls.

Having our children over 1300 miles away can be a strain for many. I know of individuals that aren't comfortable having their child go to Flagstaff for college because of the distance, so Iowa is out of the question. Granted, I miss my children and this empty nest time isn't always easy. Yet how reassuring it is to have them with such loving, caring and familiar people.

As we drove back around Lamoni, the local church marque had this verse posted:

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, Hebrews 11:1*

That verse spoke to me every time we drove by it. I realized how important faith is and how comforting it is to have faith. My faith in God allows me to trust and have confidence in the unknown. As our young adult children continue to grow and spread their wings, I rely on faith. I understand I am not the first one to come to the realization, but I can no longer plan what they do, where they are at and who they are with. That is ok. I have faith. I don't know what all will transpire in their lives, but reassurance is there because of my faith. Thank you God!

Barb