



May 2013

Dear friends,

What goes down in your living room? Do you meet Jesus or do you fight with your family? Do you spend hours watching television or hours reading and playing with your kids? If you just pause for a minute to remember, what memories will come to your mind for the one room where your family spends the most time?

Last night, we were at a friend's house praying over every room in their home. We were begging God to fill every crevice with Himself and remove all darkness, sin and destruction from their home. They had sensed evil in their home and they wanted to recommit their home to Jesus.

*Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. – 1 Peter 5:8*

As I sat in their living room, memories poured through my mind of moments in that room together. Good memories, bad memories, fun memories, sad memories. As I reflected, I thought of our own home, across town, and hoped our living room would have just as much to say of wonderful times together with friends and family.

A staff member of ours was diagnosed with cancer, he had months to live. We wanted to give him a retirement party. We wanted to honor him, bless him, encourage him. Our friends helped us. They stayed up late preparing a slideshow of memories and helping us find all the appropriate songs that would best represent our friend and make our friend laugh. Our buddy felt loved. Today, we miss him, but he is with Jesus.

*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. – John 15:13*

We are missionaries in Birmingham, but we have friends that are missionaries all over the world. In that living room, we have shared dinner with friends who serve Jesus in Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Guatemala, Romania, Southeast Asia and Belize.

*And then he (Jesus) told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. – Mark 16:15*

In that living room, we have learned more about Jesus, studied the Word together and prayed for hours together. Our kids have re-enacted Bible stories, watched videos that have taught Biblical truths, listened to our pastor's sermons and sang worship songs together.

*And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near. – Hebrews 10:25*

Our worst argument with each other took place in that room. I said the wrong thing and hurt a brother deeply. We were kicked out of the house, we came back, we all prayed, we communicated, we quit screaming and started listening, we made up. We are closer because of our awkward, angry vulnerability.

*My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. – James 1:19*

We have learned to share our hearts, our stuff, our food, our lives. We have dreamed up ways to live closer in community, to have everything in common, to share our needs and carry each other's burdens. Sometimes those couches and chairs make me feel exposed, needy, a desperate mooch, and then God reminds me that we are not alone. He has given us people who will share in order to meet our need.

*At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality. – 2 Corinthians 8:14*

We have sat under blankets watching the fire dance or the snow fall outside. We have listened to rain storms and the barking of dogs and the neighbor honking three times to tell his wife "I love you" as he drives away. We have watched cats run through the house and kids play chess at our feet. We have lived in the simple of everyday living, where time can meander and no one cares.

*And to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody. – 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12*

And we have laughed, laughed until we have cried. We have lived joy in that room. We have shared stories of our mistakes and reminisced at our adventures. We have gotten our words all tangled up and said the wrong things. We have dreamed what seems so farfetched that we have laughed at what is to come. We have felt the banner over us and it is love.

*But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you. For you bless the righteous, O LORD; you cover him with favor as with a shield. – Psalm 5:11-12*

Back to your living room... have you thought of the stories it would tell? You could ask God for some new experiences if you do not like the ones you remember. He specializes in bringing life to what is dead, for creating beauty from ashes. He makes all things new.

Thankful God uses the living room,

*And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16*