

My Special Connections in God's Kingdom

My brother Matthew and I arrived home from school on a warm autumn evening. As we finished eating supper, the phone rang. I answered. On the other end was Keith Johnson. "Hi! Mariah and I are wondering if you and Matthew can come over to play?" I smiled. "What will we play?" I asked. Keith explained that we would be making ramps and tracks to race monster trucks. We would also have a birthday party with a mud cake and cardboard sandwiches. What fun! Matthew and I are both teachers. At the time of this phone call, Keith was in the second grade and Mariah in kindergarten.

Relationships are an important part of life. The dictionary says that a relationship is a connection between people. Our close relationships do not always need to be with those who are the same age as us. In God's kingdom, we can find special connections with people of all ages. These connections can help to support us in faith.

Growing up in the small LLC congregation in Pelkie, Mich., it was easy to have friends of all ages. I am thankful to have friends like Keith and Mariah. Before moving from our area, they were students in the school where I teach. It was special when they came to my classroom door in the mornings, checking if I had time to go to the school cafeteria for breakfast. I remember feeling sad when their family moved away, knowing that I would no longer get those phone calls to go over to play hide-and-seek, race monster trucks, and have birthday parties.

It has also been special to have believing friends much older than me. When I was in high school, we had only a few young people in our congregation. We were lucky to be able to be friends with the older believers. I have happy memories of visits and sleepovers with the elderly ladies. They included yummy food, lots of laughs, and discussions about living faith. We young people had a close connection with those older friends in our congregation.

Some years ago, I lived and taught school in the small town of Ontonagon, Michigan. Also living in this town was Saima Westerinen, an older believing lady. Whenever I had a couple of free hours in the evening, I walked to Saima's. Often we sat and cut material for one of her many projects while we listened to a recorded sermon. It was fun to listen to Saima, almost 90 years old, tell interesting and funny stories from her life.

Not long ago, my dad remembered a card that I got when I graduated from high school. It was from Senia Lyytikainen, an older lady in our congregation. He said what he still remembers today is the message on the front of the card that said, "To a special friend." Today I see how these friendships have helped to keep me in God's kingdom.

Tricia Tervo

Visit about These:

- Think about your believing friends and the special connections you have in God's kingdom. How do these friends help you in life? How do they support you in faith?
- Do you have friends or special connections with people of different ages? Why is this important? Tell why this is special to you.

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