

Something About Your Presence

By Justin J. Agoglia

During my formative years my dad spent quite a bit of time traveling overseas, seeking new business opportunities just to provide food and shelter for us. Many times he would be away for two, sometimes three weeks at a time. I sure did miss him but he was simply trying to provide for us.

About the time I was seven, right after he met the Lord, he realized that his priorities weren't right. As a result he made some radical changes, especially in his personal life. From his time with the Lord to his time spent with his family, my dad did something that still impacts us today.

He became *present* in our lives.

I can remember all the soccer games he attended, all the Father and son Stockade and Battalion outings he partook in. Most fathers never showed up; my father was there. He climbed many mountains with us, weathered a few white water rafting events, and took each of us on some of his travels. From athletic events to award banquets, from medical emergencies to family outings, from baseball catches in the driveway to getting a phone call several states away, he was always there. Even when significant relationships went awry or when we felt rejected and hurt, he was there with mom telling us it would be ok and that they still loved us.

Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, if we needed my dad, he would drop everything to ensure that his family was ok. If you look at our family albums or watch any of our home videos, it often shows only four individuals: mom, Kristian, Tad, and I. You may wonder where my dad was. He was there. He was just behind the camera capturing something we couldn't see for ourselves.

Even being away from home for so many years, I could still sense the silent presence of my father's life in mine. I could still hear his voice encouraging me, challenging me, and pushing me beyond my horizon of visibility and into the unknown - the place where God meets humanity, and in so doing; it was the place where God could work through and in me. It is within this mystery that God met me and I met him. Maybe that's the struggle that I'm now facing but also the gift my dad left me.

Now it feels strange that he isn't here with us. Perhaps the reason I sense this is that when my father was alive, he was never really gone from us: he was always there, always available, and always present.

Today, the temperature dropped significantly on Long Island. Ironically, even the small, cold breeze coming through my window made me think of my father's presence in my life. He would always be so excited about the changing seasons. Whenever it got cold, he would say, "It may be a night for a fire." We loved watching a movie together while the wood was burning in the fireplace. It was that warmth that made the room so cozy. I guess today was one of those days where I thought of him and wished I could hear him say those words again.

Maybe that's why the cold reminded me today of my dad and his unique impact on my life. His very presence was like a warm, cozy fire. He radiated warmth and genuine concern for so many. And now that he's gone, the fire that sparked something within us while in his presence is no longer available.

Maybe that sounds too somber. But there was something about his presence that made him stand out from so many others. His love for people was simple, yet real. Somehow, he knew how to connect with you. And as a result

when you left his presence, you felt valued, like he heard you, and more importantly, that you were loved even when you didn't feel lovable.

As the night closes and I prepare for bed, I will think of him. In the silence of the dark and in the early hours of the morning, I will continue to reflect on how powerful my dad's presence was in my life, my family, and countless others.

Thought:

With the life that I've been given, I wonder how my presence could possibly touch another life. Even as foolish as I am, Lord, may you use this simpleton to touch a life, one heart to another, sharing a common thread of love.