

DOWN HOME: Abundant blessings in a chicken joint

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Every now and then, life blossoms with an unexpected-yet-perfect moment. You don't see it coming; you may not even notice when it arrives. But there it is, resplendent in beauty and simplicity and loveliness.

We experienced one of those moments the other night. It was so sacred and special, I'm still savoring it.

To tell you the truth, it was better than I had dreamed. Then again, I don't recall dreaming about eating dinner with my family in a home-cooked fried-chicken joint.

But there we were—Joanna and I, with our daughters, Lindsay and Molly, along with Jo's middle sister, Janis, her dad, Jim, and Molly's friend Katherine.

One of the great things about this night was the serendipity of it all.

It started when Jo volunteered to host a baby shower for one of Lindsay's best friends, Lindsey. (OK, from here on out, you'll need a chart, with "Lindsay" and "Lindsey" in the middle.)

Lindsay and Lindsey grew up in Lewisville, went to church together at First

Baptist, graduated from Lewisville High and roomed together at Hardin-Simmons University. Lindsey's mother-in-law, Susan, is one of Jo's best friends. Naturally, with all this shared history, Jo wanted to help throw a shower for Lindsey's baby, the much-anticipated/yet-to-arrive Avery.

So, Lindsey and her husband, Matt, planned to fly down from Chicago, where Matt attends graduate school. Then Lindsay and Lindsey's good friend Jaimee decided to drive up from Houston. Unfortunately, the only weekend Lindsey and Matt could come coincided with the birthday of Aaron, Lindsay's husband. She felt she couldn't leave him alone in Orlando, where he attends seminary, on his birthday. And all of us were sad.

When Aaron got wind of all the hubbub, he insisted Lindsay fly back home to Texas for the shower. He's a smart young man. Note to husbands: When your wife really, really wants to go somewhere at a time like this, here's what you say: "Go ahead, dear. It's only a birthday. I'll have another one; same time next year."

With Lindsay's last-minute plans in place, Jo and I thought of the same thing: Can Molly make it home, too? We only had a narrow window of opportunity, since Lindsay wasn't arriving until late Friday and had to leave Sunday afternoon. We dove through that window, and that's how we landed in a restaurant in Burleson, halfway between our home and Molly's apartment.

God only knows how many meals Jo, Lindsay, Molly and I have shared around a table. Now we rarely get to do that, and each time is precious.

Over dinner, I watched my daughters and their mother—laughing and talking and basking in each other's presence. I started to count my blessings, but I stopped at three.

They're far more than I deserve.

-Marv Knox

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