

# **DOWN HOME: Unexpected sorrow relieved by faith**

January 15, 2010

During the past few days, our family has experienced an unimaginable high and an almost-unbearable low: Lindsay lost her baby.

A few weeks ago, I told you how our older daughter, Lindsay, and our son-in-law, Aaron, greeted us on Christmas morning by announcing they were expecting their first child—our first grandchild—sometime around Labor Day.

Joanna and I were not surprised but shocked. Lindsay and Aaron have been married for a little more than four years, and Aaron just started his first pastorate. So, we knew they were more than ready to start having children. Still, since Jo and I are so naturally youthful and high-spirited, it took awhile to get used to the idea that we could possibly be old enough to have grandchildren.

But we quickly adapted to the idea. We even told the kids (OK, they're old enough to be parents, but they'll always be our kids.) what we want their child to call us. And pretty soon, we caught ourselves imagining how that little person would become part of our lives.

Our excitement stepped up after Lindsay's first visit to the ob/gyn doctor. She told us how they saw the baby's heart beating: "You can see the little black spot, which is the sack where the baby grows, and then a little white dot that pulses, which is the baby and the heart beating."

Somehow, the beating of that little heart made that lovely child seem all the more real. And I began to imagine fishing trips and hours on the playground, playing catch and late-night raids on the fridge for ice cream. I

began to feel like a grandparent, and I'm sure Jo did, too, just as Lindsay and Aaron began to sense the sacred blessing of parenthood.

But then came the problems, and a visit to the doctor, and no heartbeat. That signaled, of course, the breaking of all our hearts. I couldn't describe the feeling if I tried, so I won't.

Through our tears and sadness, I've been enormously proud of Lindsay and Aaron. They both posted this note on Facebook: "We lost our baby today. Our hearts hurt, but we are so thankful for a good and unchanging God who is there to comfort us and will hopefully bless us with another child soon."

All their lives, I've prayed for both of them. Their response to this crushing adversity reveals they grew up to become exactly the kind of strong, faithful Christians I prayed for them to be.

Later, Lindsay responded to an e-mail I sent her, expressing my sorrow as well as my concern for them. Lindsay specifically told me I could write a Down Home about this, because Down Home readers are like our extended family, and she knew you'd want to know.

"We're not embarrassed or ashamed to tell people we lost the baby," she wrote. "Even though it was small, it was a human life and should be celebrated."

That's my baby.