

Being there

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

One of the most important qualities of fatherhood is simply . . . being there. A man can be hard-working, moral, kind, disciplined and strong but detached. It's vital that a dad establish rules and be a good example. But the essence of fatherhood is not just the form, it's the heart. Willingness to be there for his children sometimes counts for more in the long run.

Years ago I was fired from a job. It was a blessing. The company was skating on the edge of questionable business ventures. I'd been praying about how to exit with commissions intact and this was God's unique answer. Less than a week later, they wanted me back.

There was no doubt in my mind that God had removed me from that company as a protection and blessing. I had to go back one more time to return company materials and arrange for commission payments. I knew the president and vice-president would pressure me. I just didn't want to face this situation alone. But what to do?

All my life I'd faced difficult personal and business situations alone with God. Prayer gave me direction. God sustained me. It was the same here. But I yearned to have a person stand with me.

As I prayed, the thought came to ask my step-dad. Now for those who come from a close family this might seem obvious. But my parents had divorced when I was young. My dad discouraged me from asking him for any favors, so I didn't. He was never there and I didn't expect him to be. I grew up not asking for help from any family member.

So it was with a little trepidation that I called my step-dad at work and asked if he would consider being with me and speaking for me at this meeting. With no hesitation, he said yes. He took time off work, drove with me, sat

in the meeting and forcefully spoke to the men involved. I never had to say one word, and I received the money owed me.

That's when my eyes were opened to that vital element of fatherhood that had been missing from my life. Being there. My step-dad was there. He was there when I needed help. He was there when I was scared. He was there whether it was convenient for him or not. He was a man one could depend on. What a difference!

Isn't that what Jesus taught us about God? He is always there for us. God doesn't just give us guidance and direction and send us on our way. When we need help, He is there. When we are scared or uncertain, we can turn to Him and He will be there with us. We don't have to face problems alone.

I am eternally grateful to my step-dad for being there. And so I pray this Father's Day that every father resolve to be there for his kids. Whether they live with you or not. Whether they are yours or not. And I pray that each child have the experience I had . . . of a dad being there for you when you need him. That's the way God is. That's the way human fathers can be.

Published in: *Gallatin News Examiner June 13, 1997*
Nashville Metropolitan Times June 25, 1997