



## A Friendship Is *Born*

*“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.”*

Philippians 2:1-2 NIV

My name is Catherine. When I was 21 years old, unmarried, and already the mother of one young child, I became involved in a new but tentative relationship. I was struggling with decisions and direction in my life, and I wanted more for myself and my daughter. Then I found out that I was pregnant...again.

The birthfather seemed to want to make our relationship work...at first. But I knew that adoption was the best option. Although I did have hope for our relationship because of his promises, the relationship ended.

It was then that I began exploring adoption more diligently. I was compelled to do so because I still lived with my family. I even shared a bedroom with my two-year-old. I did not want to receive state assistance to provide for two children. I did not want them to grow up living under the stress of financial hardship. With this motivation, I got in touch with Bethany and began counseling with a social worker.

Not long after, I tentatively selected a family to adopt my child. I was able to meet with them several times, ask many questions, and determine for myself that their values, lifestyle, and goals were what I envisioned for my baby's adoptive parents.

I knew that I wanted to have a fully open adoption, but finding a family who would be comfortable with open adoption might be difficult. As it turned out, this particular family said they wanted to have an open adoption too.

At that point, a long-term friendship began between me and my unborn child's parents-to-be. The couple grew to be a wonderful support system for me throughout the remainder of my pregnancy. They were present for the birth of the baby and stayed in the hospital in a room just down the corridor from me so that they could visit him during the day and take care of him during the night-giving me a chance to rest.

When it was time to say goodbye at the hospital, I have to say it was bittersweet as I watched this couple leave with their son while I went home alone. During the next few days I cried, but I received daily phone calls of support from them. I was able to talk with them about everything from the size of his feet to his appetite.

Two weeks later, I had my first visit with them. The baby was asleep when they arrived but his eyes popped open when he heard my voice. That meant everything to me because he remembered me!

I loved watching him with his parents, especially noting the bonding that had taken place. Today, I know that they love and adore their son, and I see how he loves and adores his parents. I know this because we have spent every holiday together...and then some. They cherish this daddy's boy, and that is so important to me.

And they are wonderful to me too. I recently graduated from dental assisting school, and they attended the ceremony. I want others to know that I'm more mature now; I've grown up a lot. I know that I am blessed, and I show gratitude more now.

Adoption has been an awesome experience, but it's also been hard. I never knew that doing the right thing would hurt so badly. I knew I had the

love my son needed, but it would have been selfish for me to try to raise him. I was able to make the decision about adoption because I realized how difficult it would be to parent two little children while I was still in school and barely getting by.

My son has great parents now, and I am still a part of his life. I wanted to create a better life for him, and I did, through adoption.

*Sarah Jones joined the Bethany staff last spring as the Satellite Director in Northwest Arkansas.*

*She received a bachelor of social work degree from Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Sarah has most recently worked for Big Brothers/Big Sisters in Siloam Springs.*

*Sarah and her husband, Jason, have two adorable daughters, Mackenzie (8) and Katlyn (5).*

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