

The dew on the first tee box wasn't even dry when this unique foursome started their early morning round of golf. It was suggested that they play best ball to help speed up the play and also to keep the group together throughout the game. They had known each other a little more than a month and a half, but they had catching up to do. They hadn't spoken much since early June and here they were in late July playing golf together. "I couldn't sleep well last night" I said, "I was too excited for today". The three others laughed and shared the sentiment. It felt like we had played together for years. The golf banter was good, just like old friends. Just like family.

I couldn't help but wonder if this is what Heaven will be like. A place where every face is familiar and every conversation is like talking with your twin brother. It was so familiar and yet strangely unknown.

This was a reunion after all. Not a family reunion but a "Families on Mission" reunion. These families actually met on a family mission trip in Cherokee, North Carolina. Eight families, in all, made up one team that ministered at several retirement homes and two campgrounds during their week "on mission". Twelve children between the ages of 5 and 15 made up the large majority of the team. They came from several different states to come and do God's work and to do it as a family. Lives were certainly changed during this very successful mission trip. We witnessed and heard of several campground kids and elderly people accepting Christ during the week's work. The people of Cherokee also saw God at work in all the improvement projects that were completed during the week.

The week was only a few hours old when plans were made by a few of the women to get together sometime after the trip and have all the families over for a picnic with swimming and golf for the guys. We were all Baptists after all and food had to play a large role in this "reunion" as well. Six of the families lived in Georgia and most lived within 30 miles of each other. The others were from Florida and Kentucky.

We said our "goodbyes" when we left Cherokee and like so many other promises made during a week with God as the focus, I felt like there was a chance it could be our last. My wife on the other hand had other intentions and much more integrity than I. The emails started to flow two weeks later, with pictures and plans and dates and activities and menus. I would get a daily report of who was coming and who couldn't make it for such and such date. I was busy with life, with my work, with my duties at church, but this sounded like it may actually happen. "The Jones' are coming in from Kentucky and they are going to stay at our house for the weekend." She said. I was starting to get a little excited about seeing everyone again. This seemed like it was really going to happen. I was even going to get a chance to golf at a really nice country club.

Well, the Jones' were coming on Friday evening from Kentucky. The reunion was on Saturday in Georgia. We were playing Golf in the morning having lunch at the pool and a catered Bar-B-Q dinner. Five of the eight families were going to participate. I thought that this was going to be great. Then I got a call from my wife on the Thursday before. "I was just thinking" she said, "what if we had everyone here at the house when the Jones' arrive"? "We can have snacks and the kids can play and we can catch up before the big get together." I was thinking it was a safe invitation and that most wouldn't come but I was OK with the idea. I have been wrong many times before but this one took the cake. Not only did they all come, they brought enough food to feed a professional football team. This thing was unstoppable. It was like a freight train

organized by the women of our Families on Mission team. God must have been in this, because this is unusual behavior for normal folks these days. These relationships don't normally take root, but I have to keep reminding myself that these seeds were planted in very fertile soil. The common purpose of sharing Christ and seeing the lost saved. Not only for Christ's sake but the sake of our children. Showing them by example what being "on mission" is about. This is the most tender and fertile soil ever. Relationships are made in this particular environment. The children are the glue that put this model together. I must say that when they saw each other for the first time in a month and a half, they connected in a way I've never seen. They started right where they left off on the last day in Cherokee. That was the day most of our team went down to the creek and swam with our families and newfound friends. That was the day God showed us his beauty. Not only by what He created in nature, but by what He created in our hearts for each other. This is a great family, the family of God. I love spending time with them. I can't wait to see them again this winter in Boone, North Carolina, when we go skiing and snow tubing for our second "Dream Team" reunion.

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