

Ordinary Days

by Marsha Boyd-Mitchell



Unsplash Mae Mu

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
John 1:14, ESV

When I was young, I grew up on the same farm as my grandparents. They lived in the original farmhouse that was on the property they had bought as newlyweds, then barely 20-year-olds. In the 1960s, my mom and dad built a house for themselves next door while my dad and grandparents farmed poultry together. We dwelt together as extended family. My youth was spent riding my bike between the two places and acquiring the knack for coming into my grandmother’s kitchen just when she was taking cookies out of the oven.

Unless there was something special going on away from the farm or it was errand day, you could always find my grandparents at home. They could always be counted on for troubleshooting on the place: pump up a bicycle tire, perform pick up or drop off service, provide a cold

drink of water, or do a quick chore in someone’s absence.

Meals at my grandparents’ home were on a regular schedule. They had supper every night around 5:30. I outgrew the bicycle around 16 and traded it in for a car. There was a back driveway that connected our places, and as a teenager, I can remember driving through Gram and Gramp’s yard in the winter, when the sky got dark early, and seeing them sitting together at the supper table in the kitchen. There were times in my early twenties when I’d drive through and be thankful that the image of them there at the table was still a reality. Their home was a hub for extended family to frequent on a regular basis, with Christmas as one of the year’s biggest highlights. It wasn’t about the presents or the amazing recipes my grandmother produced for us, but the beautiful consistency of knowing where “home” was, come Christmastime.

They had their struggles in life like everyone, but they were always there for me and the rest of the family. One warm spring day in June of 2001 the pictures I held in my mind

of them sitting together at the table or of all of us together around the Christmas tree began to change when my grandfather suffered a heart attack. Yet as I’ve grown older, I have come to understand that their ordinary days were built into the very foundation of my life.

There was a Hallmark Movie a few years ago with the title, *The Magic of Ordinary Days*. I have thought of this phrase frequently during the pandemic. Up until March 2020, my life and calendar were packed with speaking engagements, travel, and commitments. During the lockdown, only very ordinary days were permitted. All of a sudden, I had more time to see neighbours in the yard and to consider a predictable rhythm to my life. Even post-lockdown, I have kept much closer to my immediate community.

I believe it’s a comfort to know that the simplest things that we do can have the biggest impact overall. The consistency of being “steady” for those in our sphere of influence can make all the difference in our kids’ formation. While the farming chapter closed for my family some time ago, I still draw strength from the rhythm of my days growing up on the farm.

As you turn your hearts to the Christmas season, know that your family counts on some ordinary traditions to bring everyone together. Whether it is special baking, certain tree ornaments, specific gatherings, or church services, Christmas is a time to turn your heart toward home. The Christmas season is about Emmanuel—*God with us*. The Son of God humbled himself to walk with humanity. May the God of peace bless you and yours with beautiful, ordinary days.



Dr. Marsha Boyd-Mitchell is the executive director of Christian Action Federation of NB Inc. and principal of Sussex Christian School, New Brunswick.