

Hello Friends, Family and Family friends,

Friday, 16 July 2010

(*Jody here*) I get the privilege of writing this month's newsletter. I sit sweating at our computer, as the temperature is climbing well above the '90's, and no matter what anybody says, window AC units do not cool off every part of the house. We watch the weather, and only turn them on when absolutely necessary, and as we will have some cadets over this Sunday, we thought we ought to start cooling off the house now in preparation of their arrival (and so we can be a little more comfortable during this muggy weekend)!

This has been a hard week for us; we have received much news that has caused us to fall on our knees in grief and prayer. My good friend and fellow home-school mom, a woman with intense gentleness and wisdom, has just yesterday been diagnosed with Inflammatory Breast Cancer, the most aggressive cancer there is. They are down at Walter Reid Army Medical Center today; if she comes to mind, please pray for Jody and Chad (Active Duty Army), that she would survive this and live. Her two children, ages 8 and 11, are sweet and kind.

And Chris Goeke, a 2008 graduate and well-loved Cadet Sunday School Teacher, has just been killed in Afghanistan, a mere 4 weeks before his deployment was to end. We don't know too much right now, as the news is just getting out to friends, but the network of recent grads is strong and they are calling us with tears in their voices, not only for the grief of their friend but also for the realization that they, too, will be deployed very soon, and they wonder, and stop, and pause. I hear fear in their voices. Even now the tears roll down my cheeks as I think of our beloved friends and cadets, so young and so very brave. We have had so many of them around our table, our kids know them and love them. We are connected to them, we KNOW them.

We will once again host some cadets for the annual Ice Cream Social (1400 new cadets find a well-received reprieve from Summer Basic Training) -- it is the halfway point of Beast Barracks, and they welcome a couch to sit on, no one to salute, and a meal cooked with love. Again, I tear up when I see them, as they try so hard to be strong, having gone through in 3 weeks what most of us may never experience (night land-navigation anyone?). We pray that, even if this is the only contact we have with them, that God would somehow use us in their lives to draw them closer to Jesus.

Eric enjoys being part of the team who ministers to 600-700 new cadets each week at Chaplain's time. I have been busy baking cookies for it and contributing what I can to the thousands needed each week! Eric said yesterday that on the Land Navigation course, a cadet was followed by a *bear* for part of the time. This is where Eric recruits for the next class of Sunday school teachers, and he continues to receive dozens of applications from godly men and women who want to serve God by teaching youngsters. How heartbreaking to only be able to take about 20 of them! Please pray that Eric would have wisdom to know whom to choose, and that the others who were not chosen would get plugged into one of the many incredible ministries here (Officer Christian Fellowship, Navigators, etc., to name a couple) so they won't fall through the cracks.

We continue to be involved with the community here, in all those small ways that we pray blesses the people we come in contact with. We recently had dinner with the Austin family, a retired military family, who now run the Officer Christian Fellowship, and decided we wanted to be JUST like them when we grow up... Duncan, a senior cadet, and good cadet friend had major knee surgery recently, needed a shower and a meal, and we enjoyed his laughter as we watched Mr. Bean together... At an upcoming baby

shower, we will be giving a co-worker of Eric's 2 or 3 books that have meant much to us, and have helped us become better parents and marriage partners. They are a young married couple – not yet believers – expecting their first baby, and we wanted to give something that would help them navigate the tricky waters of parenthood. Meanwhile, we prepare for the Fall's teaching, and how to best impact those who attend.

We try to live intentionally, not miss opportunities to BE there for people, to be present and real, to LISTEN (have you ever noticed how quickly some people talk, as if they're afraid of being interrupted?), to ask them how they are doing and wait for the answer.

Ministry at West Point could never end. It is busy, it is full, and can be urgent at times. So, we pause, collect our thoughts in prayer, and drive on, meeting one need at a time (and sometimes 3 or 4, and then we pause, and collect our thoughts...) and hopefully doing the work, as imperfect and ghastly as we are, that God has called us to do. Hallelujah that it is Him and not us! We'd be a disaster otherwise!

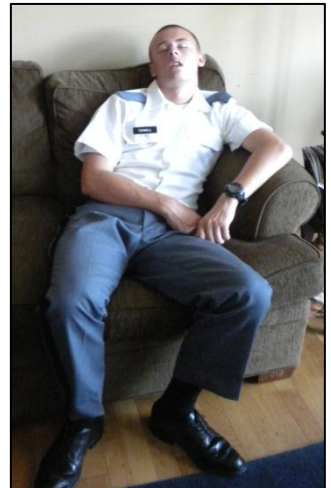
So incredibly thankful for each of you,

Eric, Jody, Joel, Jane, Berea, and John

Prayer request:

* Would you continue to lift up Eric in prayer? His foot is still bothering him, and was also recently diagnosed with Lyme's Disease – possibly from a tick bite. Pray for good medical advice.

* For Jody and Chad, dealing with aggressive cancer, and the Goeke family who mourns an untimely death.



A few of the New Cadets (Jae Yu, Ben Amrhein, Howard Tai, Matt Rohrback, Diane Zybko, and Kevin Tidwell) from NJ, PA, CA, WA, GA, and SC . . . and weekly Chaplain's Time with New Cadets

We are extremely grateful for the financial support you have sent our way – we definitely could not be here with out your help: *Harvest Foundation, PO Box 2670, Phoenix, Arizona 85002*