



“I know  
God has  
gotten us  
this far.”



TERRY REDDY

Thirty years may seem like an extraordinarily long time to think about something. In all honesty, it was not a constant thought but it did surface occasionally. I had gotten to know Nancy through an organization we belonged to. She had a nurturing demeanor that drew people to her. You knew she was truly interested in you and cared about you. It wasn't until several months later, I learned she was a Stephen Minister and worked with people in Hospice and their families. I certainly didn't understand how she managed to raise her five children, spearhead a day camp for children with cancer, work outside her home and minister to her care receivers. I was in awe.

Fast forward 30 years and there I was on the threshold of committing to a year of Stephen Ministry training and two years of service. I don't know if I would have said yes had I not known Nancy. Not that I think I am anything like her, but she modeled for me the kind of person I try to be. One who has a heart for others and truly listens, who freely gives to those in need and knows it's only because God is in charge.

My training was not nearly complete when I received the call from my sister in late February. Her daughter of 21 had been hospitalized 40 days earlier with pneumonia. Kayli was born with multiple handicaps so any illness presented monumental challenges. Although the pneumonia was cleared up, multiple complications followed. She required round the clock monitoring—40 days had taken their toll—my family needed help. I arrived just hours before the doctors delivered the news everyone was praying would never come. There was nothing more they could do for her; it was time to move her to Hospice.

I took the night shift with my sister. For 11 nights we talked, prayed, cried and spent precious moments with our Kayli. I would have gone regardless of my training but it was my training that gave me the courage to have those difficult conversations, that gave me the stamina to persevere, that gave me the knowledge to know how to listen and listen, and listen without judgement, that gave me the comfort of knowing God was there in the midst of everything and that no matter the final outcome, He would never leave us alone.

Kayli passed after a long battle, but our battle is just beginning. Knowing she is at peace, free from pain and will live eternally in the presence of Our Father provides such comfort. Even still, some days are better than others. The reminders come at the most unexpected times so my “ministry” is ongoing. I know God has gotten us this far and will see us to the other side.

