Dear Open Door Family,

I HATE GOODBYES! It has not always been that way. When I was in High school I could get caught up in the adventure of being away at camp for 8 weeks and not miss home or family all that much. But after I married Carol - saying goodbye to her or our daughters when they still lived at home was never enjoyable. I did - many times - but I have never liked it. Yes, once I get into the trip I enjoy the ministry part of it. I am always amazed to see God doing wonderful things in the lives of people. It is exciting to see God use me in some way to encourage or help others. But getting home is always so wonderful. I am glad that God understands me and that He does not condemn me for the fact that I hate the last couple of days before I actually start a trip. I am glad that in His compassion He watches over me and gives me the grace to go and watches over Carol and gives her the grace to send me on my way. I Love these verses that tell us of the love and compassion of God.

PSALM 103:13-17 *(NLT) The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. [14] For he understands how weak we are; he knows we are only dust. [15] Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die. [16] The wind blows, and we are gone -as though we had never been here. [17] But the love of the Lord remains forever with those who fear him....*

Our God is the perfect father who is both tender and compassionate. He knows us He understands us, after all He is the one who made us. God knows that we are not much more than grass or wild flowers which bloom and die. We have a life cycle built into us by our God. We are born, we live and we die. The difference between us and the flowers or the grass of the field is that God LOVES US and after we are saved we enter into a personal Relationship with Him. He loves us with a Love that NEVER FAILS. His Love remains even when our faith is weak and harassed. His Love remains even when we struggle to do what He has called us to do. His love remains even when we have to say goodbye for a time to those we love. His love and compassion is why we can count on His strength and help during those times when we are stressed.

PRAYER: O God, You have proved Your Love over and over but especially in knowing and understanding me. Even though You know me so well You still Love me and have poured out your Love and Compassion on me. THANK You. Thank You that you understand that I hate to say goodbye, but that I still go trusting You in those times of separation.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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