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# Love in Every Room

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# FAMILY TIES

*A home with a little dust and a lot of laughter will win the heart of God every time!*

# LOVE IN EVERY ROOM

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

“A house is a physical building, walls that shelter, protect, and sometimes even divide. A home is the invisible structure, radiant love that embraces each member of the family and reaches out to draw in friends, neighbors, and strangers,” says Karla Dornacher, author of a book sharing the title of this column.

Karla’s delightful book, handwritten, is a tribute to every woman who pursues the high and holy calling of the keeper of the home. It seems to me that this distinct honor is a rather illusive concept in this day and age. Many women are pursuing, and rightfully so, all manner of accomplishments which enrich human life. This recognition that God is in us, the heartbeat of the home, could use more attention.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11 we read, “Encourage each other and build each other up.” Women’s words are powerful—they can bless and build up or wound and destroy. Some may have seen this message on a T-shirt, “If mama ain’t happy, no one’s happy.”

Perhaps there is no greater need for encouraging others than in our own homes. God can show us practical ways to express His love to others. It might be flowers, a quiet embrace, a phone call, or note of gentle encouragement. “Whether your note is penned on beautiful stationery or on a sticky note in a child’s lunch box, you are the scented ink God uses to spread the fragrance of Christ’s love,” suggests Karla.

To paraphrase Psalm 133:1, “Behold how good and pleasant it is for families to live together in harmony.” Isn’t this the true mission of the home? A place where others sense God’s love when they visit, where there is refreshment and rest for your soul as well as for physical needs—this is true hospitality to be first shared with our own families and then for those who would knock at our door.

In other words, invite others to share in your life and the blessings you have been given. “If we will open our hearts and homes to the divine principles of life, we shall become channels for currents of life-giving power. From our homes will come healing, bringing life and beauty and fruitfulness where now are barrenness and dearth,” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p 355).

When my father and step-mother joined the Adventist church in Bend, Oregon, I had just come to live with them. At thirteen, it was a huge transition for me. Among my most favorite and comforting memories of that transition are older church members who showered us with love, acceptance, good food, and good fun. They recognized this was a difficult time in my life. Those dear couples have passed away, but the memories—sights, sounds, smells—of their homes remain a warm comfort today. Truly, the women in those families understood how to provide an environment of loving openness—an important part of my journey toward understanding the “mission of our home.”



Susan Murray is an associate professor of family studies who teaches behavioral science and social work at Andrews University. She is a certified family life educator and licensed marriage and family therapist.

Karla Dornacher, *Love in Every Room*, Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson (1998).

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