



Porch in March

I must say that this post was inspired by a blog post of a co-worker. [Connie Riddle](#)'s post "[Home](#)" stirred up much in my heart and mind and I had to blog.

Home is where the heart is. Home is where you lay your head. These phrases and many more have been used to try to define "Home." I think we all have different things that come to mind when we hear the word. For some it is an image of the house they grew up in.

Others it is their house now. Some skip the building and think of people; parents, kids, grandparents, etc. Some think of the smells of baking bread, pies fresh out of the oven, pipe tobacco, the breeze blowing in smells from outside. Some hear the sounds of laughter, mom's voice calling them to dinner, dad's reading the Bible. I must say many people don't have these positive memories. Their memories of home hurt. The memories of home cause them to want to make their home different.

For me, I have had the blessing of living in several homes. Let me clarify what I mean. The house my parents live in was the one I grew up in and it was home for me for decades. But I

say I have lived in several homes because, there are several places that I called home in my heart. I may not have lived in them of long periods of time. But they were home none the less. Let me share why.



Spring in King

Mom & Dad's house on Brown Rd. was our second house, but I don't remember much of the first. So the Brown Rd. house was home. I grew up there. I had fun playing in the creek that runs beside the house. I remember playing in the cool basement during the hot summers. I built spaceships with cardboard boxes, wagons and boards. I had friends over and we would fly and fight the bad guys. I build Lego's and blocks on the den floor. I spend Saturday afternoons watching PBS (Doctor Who, This Old House, etc). I practiced my baritone in the kitchen. I remember doing spelling (daily) with Mom so I could do OK on the weekly spelling tests. I enjoyed mowing the yard for Dad. I remember riding my fire truck around the yard and not getting punished too bad when I ran it into Dad's truck. The Brown Rd. house was home because memories were built there and my parents live there.

Going to college at [Elon](#) changed that dynamic. Elon, itself, didn't really become home fully while I was there. But it changed home for me. But during my college years a place became more of a home for me.



Front of Tise

[Laurel Ridge Moravian Camp](#) became home. I spent one week each summer there growing up. I loved it and was a place that was a spiritual home for me. I could look around at the beauty of God's creation and hear about Jesus's love for me in one place. It was a literally and physically a mountain top experience for me each summer and I loved sharing it with friends I made from all over the South. I spent two summers there in college. It was a dream come true. Yes, it was HARD work and not always a mountain top experience. But for me work and helping are spiritual gifts. So living there helped me walk out those gifts.

It was home because it was a place that I could serve the Lord, be fed by Him, and give back a little of what I received growing up. It was also home because of the people.

Serving with 15 others on full-time staff really bonded us. It is truly because of one other staff member that I came back the second summer. John Miller was a guy I didn't expect to get along with. But I grew to respect him and appreciate him. He helped me remember why I was serving. I was reminded of how much I looked up to the M-Staff growing up and how I wanted to pass that along to the next generation.

The houses of both sets of grandparents were home as well. I have fond memories of being treated like a king by Mary Etta (Grandmother Gentry) when I was sick. I have great memories of conversations and laughter around the table and fun around the Christmas tree. It is a place of family and nostalgia as well. I love sitting and talking with Mary Etta about the past and hearing about her prayer life. Her spiritual walk inspires me and it is one of the reasons her house is a home. Granddad & Grandmother Allred's house is no longer a home to me, because they are both truly home. Home with their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But that house was home to me. I spent at least a week each summer there and countless weekends throughout the year. I loved working with Granddad on the farm. Loved the games of Uno and times doing puzzles. Good food and funny stories. Oh how I wish we would have taped Granddad sharing some of the funny stories of WWII. I know there were hard times too and I wish I could ask him about them, but I will have to wait. I remember being excited to go fishing on the lake. Getting ready and going to church with them. The Gentry and Allred homes were homes because of love!



Proyecto Libertad Mission

[Bocachica](#), Colombia and the [mission](#) there is slowly becoming a home to me as well. I have gone on five mission trips there. I support the work there and the people. It is a mission field where the Lord has called me to go and serve and support when I am not called to go. However, I know it is the home of the [Ariel family](#). They were called out of our church and

the Lord has made that community home for them. Once again an example of home being where you serve.

A year after college I moved back to Alamance County. After spending time in two different apartments, I moved into Copeland Apartments. I spent close to 12 years there.



### Sunroom Storm

That apartment became home to me. It was a place of settled-ness. It was a place of familiarity and memories. I know that I dreamed about being in an actual house, but that apartment was home for me. It was home during 9/11 and I remember watching the news there. It saw me through being jobless for several months and much more. It was a safe place and one where I could think. I enjoyed the late nights praying in the sun room. I enjoyed watching rain, snow, rainbows and sun through those windows. But things were changing in me and around me and I was truly ready for a house.

Six months of searching with the help of a good realtor and a great brother in the Lord (who is a contractor) lead to Emma. My affectionate name for my home.



When I first bought it

This house was near where I lived in the apartment. It had a style I liked. It was in a good area. It was in my price range. It became home well before the papers were signed. But as I spend time working in the house, it became home more and more. After a month's work by Thom, the sub-contractors, myself and others. I was able to move. My church family and my parents helped me move in one day. The house was blessed by the prayers of many, blessed by the hard work of many, blessed by the financial and practical support of many, and I pray blessed by the life I lead in it. It is a place I have made own. But I truly know it is not mine. I'm making loan payments. But money for a lot of it has come from both sides of my family. It is truly a blessing to be here thanks to the hard work and provision of my family. It is filled with furniture photos, art, and items from family and friends from around the world. Each space tells a little of the life the Lord has blessed me with. Would I be sad to lose it all, sure. But I try to hold on loosely and see the things as reminders and not possessions. I see this home as a tool, a gift and place entrusted to me to be a good steward of for as long as the Lord wills. It has been a joy to have family and friends over and I look forward to doing that more as the years go by. It is home because it is where the Lord is establishing me to serve. It is a home base from which to go out and serve.

So you see it is not just a place, not just a building, not just memories, and not just people. Home is all of those. But for me, home is where God has your heart. Contentment, peace,

grace, shelter, love, service, memories, nurturing, helping, fellowship and faith are all things that make a home. We need to appreciate the home(s) the Lord has given us. But like all other good things the Lord give us, it is only a shadow of what is to come. We all have a longing in our hearts. Family, friends, work, service, and home are all things that make our lives full and rich. They are blessings from the Lord, but none of those blessings can fill the longing we have in our hearts. Jesus Christ, God the Son, died to restore our relationship with the Father and give us eternity with Him. This world is not our home. Our home is with God. And when God has our heart, we are truly HOME!

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