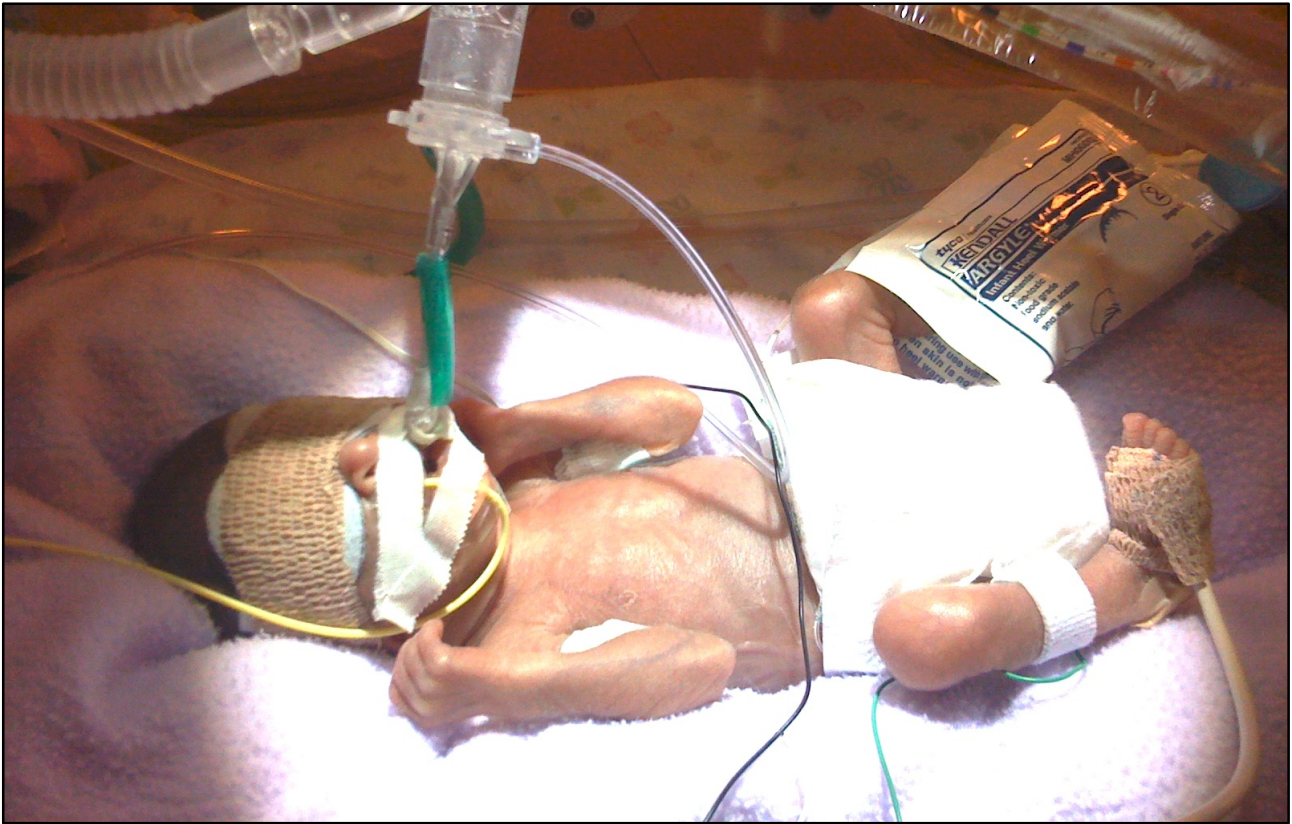


SUNDAY ARTICLE

ST DAVID'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ♦ 6 NOVEMBER 2016



Baby Joanna – the author's daughter

My Special-Needs Calling

Megan Royes

It was nearly four years ago when it happened.

Four years ago when my firstborn was rushed into the world and whisked off to Neonatal Intensive Care. Four years ago when I heard the words, “Don’t get your hopes up; 24-week babies don’t stay around long.” Four years ago when I stood over the incubator of a one-pound baby and asked, “Do I really want this job after all?”

I had always longed to lead a life of significance, beginning in the fifth grade, when I set my sights on the U.S. presidency. I think God knew these deep longings, but also knew my heart’s propensity to settle for short-lived, cheap, cultural influence.

Perhaps that’s why he made me a mother.

Dual Callings

My primary calling is being a mother to a healthy 1-year-old son and a 4-year-old daughter with a severe feeding disability.

Mothers don't just feed bodies and change clothes – they fill souls and change habits.

It is a joyful, hopeful, sorrowful, tear-filled calling. Our days begin with bottle feedings and diaper changes, and end with bathtime, booktime, and bedtime kisses.

And the hours in between? I make meals. I wipe messes. I stop fights. I fill bellies. I teach letters. I make blanket tents. I pick up puzzle pieces, and buckle carseats, and do all the things every mom does every day to take care of her kids.

But Mothers don't just feed bodies and change clothes – they fill souls and change habits. Mothers train, nurture, pray, please, discipline, admonish, comfort, and care.

Caring for a special-needs child provides another, unique set of responsibilities.

I spend hours on the phone with doctors and insurance companies. I drive to and from hospitals and specialists' offices, and sit at her bedside while she awakes from anaesthesia.

I make specialized meals and mourn the loss of family dinners. I agonize over her calories and measure vomit and record the day's numbers. I spoon-feed a 4-year-old who still can't chew breakfast cereal, and I implement countless techniques recommended by therapists.

Having a daughter with special needs drives me to my knees. Several times a day, in fact, I'm on my knees cleaning up the vomit of one whose body rejects it.

But I'm on my knees far more in repentance – confessing my envy of moms with the “normal kids,” my despair because things may never change, my favouritism of the “easy child,” and my arrogance towards God in thinking I know better.

My secondary calling is working alongside my husband in campus ministry. I sit across from women as they lay their souls bare, and I lead them to the Word, to Jesus himself – the spring of living water who never runs dry. I teach crowds of women from the Scriptures and minister through blogging to other young moms.

There's incredible significance in my public ministry to young women and moms. But Jesus would say there's greater significance in my private ministry to my children.

Glory in the Everyday

My most influential moments don't come when I'm the one on stage, or the “wise counsellor” with Bible in

hand, or the faceless blogger spouting words of parental wisdom. Many people can teach, after all.

But Jesus says the pathway to great influence lies not just in teaching, but in behind-the-scenes, sacrificial, “nothing-in-this-for-me” self-donation. Servanthood. Walking in the footsteps of the One who came to give his life away.

It's easy to get it backwards, isn't it?

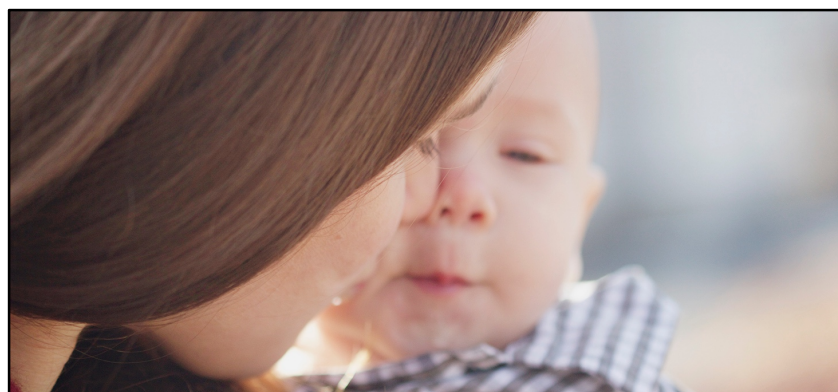
Perhaps my moments of deepest influence are when I'm on my knees cleaning vomit for the fifth straight time that day, for the fourth straight year. Perhaps it's when I watch her chew a single cracker and excitedly announce, “I did it, Mama!” Perhaps it's when the doctor announces a weight gain of six whole ounces, and we cheer and applaud because she continues to grow stronger each day.

These are moments of little significance to the world. There is no nod, no applause, no commendation from others. But when I lift my head and see the One on the throne, my eyes see the King of glory who became the greatest servant of all. In these small moments, both his majesty and humility remind me that great joy comes in serving others. And in our service, we experience glimpses of the glory to come.



Megan Royes spent her childhood dreaming of one day having a successful and prestigious career. But God changed both her direction and passions during her time at Lafayette College.

She joined DiscipleMakers in 2007 with a longing to see women know the abundant life offered to them through Jesus Christ. Megan is married to Dave, and they have two energetic children - Joanna and Luke. She loves blogging, coffee, playing the piano, and warm weather.



Megan and Joanna – mother and daughter

Source: www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/my-special-needs-calling

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