

Are We Blood-Related?

By Nicole Cleveland

One thing I miss most about home is not having my children grow up around family. As a child, I was fortunate to have family around me ([right next door, in fact.](#)) It was not strange for me to spend weekends over [at](#) different family members' homes. [Going](#) bike riding with my cousins or going over [to](#) Aunt Cile's or Pop-Pop's after school was normal. My mother never had to scramble for a sitter.

When we think about family, we tend to think of our immediate family: [my first](#) cousin or my Aunt Catherine (blood-related). Having no "real" family in the area really concerned me at first; [but](#) as time grew, so did my family. No... they didn't move down here with me. The family I am talking about are my brothers and sisters in Christ. My adopted family – my church family.

I am so grateful for my extended family. They have been there when my "real" family was not. Even though I have changed churches, my family has still remained "my family." A building shouldn't separate you if you are connected. We may not have the same biological mother, but we have the same DADDY. The same FATHER. We are truly related by the blood.

After all, the family I grew up with was an adopted family. We were not tied by our genes or our blood, [but](#) they were my "real" family. My Pop-Pop and Aunt Cile raised us to never think we were different. You see, my mother was a baby when she was adopted. Her biological mother had an affair and had to get rid of the baby before her husband was released from prison. That's when my Nana and Pop-Pop took my mother in. And I am so grateful that they did. I never got a chance to tell them that. (*Tears streaming down my face now.*)

Thank you Na-Na [and](#) Pop-Pop for adopting my mother and showing my brother and [me](#) another way of life – may you both rest in peace. (You both would be so proud of me – I wish I could show you all that the Lord has done for me.)

In the article "[But Lord, It's Painful,](#)" Priscilla Tate Gilmore shares the emotions of watching her adopted daughter reunite with the birth mother who released her years ago. Miss Gilmore recognizes, through the process, that the Lord remains her constant companion – and that promise has proven to be more than enough.

Also check out [how](#) CBS star of Survivor Joanna Ward became victorious in her battle against the bulge when she recognized the connection among the soul, mind and spirit – and how a fitness devotional was born from that foundation.

Enjoy our new issue!

Nicole Cleveland is founder of Breathe Again Magazine Online. She is on a mission to empower, encourage and motivate women by posting real life articles of women overcoming adversity.
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