

The secret of finding just the right size

What Is the Right Size for a Family?

Just small enough to know each other's name
and why the name came to be instead of some other;
Just large enough to remember what means the most
from the stories told loud and clear, whispered and quiet;

Just skillful enough to mend broken toys
and hurts when someone falls hard or soft;

Just funny enough to laugh at the ways
that set us apart from every other family;

Just wise enough to tell what is right
about daring plans that stretch the imagination;
Just patient enough to hope for the grand possibility
in spite of a week that went too long and too hard;

Just faithful enough to be there into the night
when most of the world is asleep;

Just good enough to claim Holy promises
from the friend of all families;

Just bold enough to love the littlest and the oldest

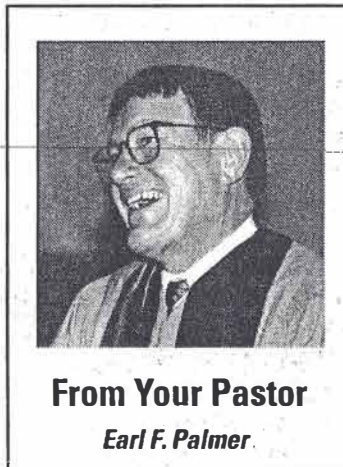
Just because you want to
and because your family is just the right size.

— Earl Frank Palmer

Finding just the right size is a question always on our minds.

When we try on shoes or a shirt we are looking for the right size, but the question is also an interpersonal one. How many people can I really know well? How many projects and jobs can I accomplish before I drift into burn out?

There are other size questions, too. How much money do I need to be a responsible provider and yet a wise and generous steward. Size is a time question, too: How much time should I spend at work, at play, on the Internet? Size is a group question: What is the right size for a city? For a school? For a church? For a



family?

As I see it the answer to all of these size questions is not about size at all, because there are families of three that have more interpersonal fellowship than families of six and there ~~are families of six where each child is more uniquely~~ noticed and celebrated than in one-child homes. There are single parent families that have become the right size because faith, hope, and love have made up for one absent place.

We are the answer to the questions about size if we care just enough to take the place that only we can fill and then in friendliness reach out to the person on each side. We have then made even the large and most complicated gatherings of people just the right size.

Size is like time, it comes down to a question of equilibrium and rhythm so that the answer lies in learning the skill of balancing large and small, fast and slow, many and few.

Any size is right when we do the work it takes to know someone else by name and someone knows our name, then your family and your city and your church is just the right size.