A Tribute to My Daughter
My little girl, Kara Beth, is 28 today. The years have flown by. I remember the excitement of knowing I was pregnant, the thrill of knowing my baby was a girl, the moment of first hearing her heartbeat, the joy of her arrival. And now here we are so many years later, she and I. I am her mom when she needs, and how I love that role and yet we have grown, evolved, changed. We are friends as well.

When she was born, I worried that I wouldn't know how to parent a girl; the hairbows, the frilly, the emotions. I distinctly remember seeing her become her own self, toddling around with my necklaces and girly stuff, and I knew my fears were needless.

Quite the daredevil, Kara Beth would climb my bookshelves and I found her more than once hanging off the sides waiting to be rescued.

And her first word, I remember that. “No.” Many words soon followed and at nine months, she had a vocabulary going.

I remember how she would go in the church nursery at 2 years old, organizing and leading the whole place. It was quite amusing to watch and was a precursor of things to come.

I remember her birthday party invitation list in 5th grade with 75 names on it. I made her go par it down and she came back with 70.

I remember her elementary school SGA speeches when the student body would be swept away by her talent and charisma.

I remember the highs and lows of school days, the celebrations, the petty jealousies between girls, the competitions.

And dating. And her year at the International House of Prayer immediately after high school graduation. Then college. Then marriage. And career.

It’s all happened so fast. And of course, there’s so much to come.

The process of parenting is, I think, as much about parents growing and maturing as it is about our children growing and maturing. When I think of what I’ve learned being a mother, how I’ve changed, stretched, how it’s taught me what’s really important, I see the divine plan. A mom…a parent…gives, cares, nurtures, soothes, cheerleads, corrects, directs, teaches, and somewhere down the road finds that what felt like a time-out from the
pursuit of one’s personal agendas has, in truth, been the greatest investment into personal development.

I suppose it should be a clue to a mom when her body begins to stretch and expand that what is happening in the natural is also happening in the spiritual. No longer in 101, the classes become more challenging, demand more time, energy, stretching and expanding.

But I’ve learned that I don’t have to have all the answers. I don’t have to be a perfect mom. And as Kara Beth once told me, “You don’t have to be strong for me.”

I don’t have to feel scared or intimidated. I can trust the process as long as I love well. The important things are an expression of loving well.

Like being there.

Talking.

Sharing.

Loving.

Listening.

Encouraging.

So this is a tribute to my sweet daughter. Happy Birthday, Kara Beth. You’ve taught me more than I’ve taught you. You are kind and good and smart and adventurous and gifted and beautiful.

You truly are what your name means, “A House of Joy.”

I love you, Kara Beth!