

## **Give Them Time To Grow**

**Cliff Sabroe**

Today my family and I decided that it would be a good idea to take a walk over to Tahoe Joes and have a nice lunch. On the way there Owen kept getting out of the stroller and of course Claire wanted out too (fussing and crying ensued). As you can imagine, by the time we arrived at the restaurant Zinnie and I were both flustered. We got our table and begin to look over the menu. The kids decided that it would be a great time to touch everything that they are not supposed to do. I grabbed hold of Owen and told him very firmly “sit down, legs straight, hands folded and be quiet!” I then glanced up to see Zinnie looking at me, and in a condescending tone she replied “do you really expect a four year old to sit still in a restaurant?... Did you at his age?” Sheepishly I responded “no”.

I am sure many of you after reading this are smiling because you know good and well that it is impossible to get a four year old to sit still for a long period time. You know that it was foolish of me to think that he was capable of doing otherwise. I should not expect anything more from my four year old than what is normal for a four year old. I need to allow him some time to grow.

When dealing with children you learn very quickly that there are certain things they cannot understand nor should be expected to understand. This is why as parents we let them grow up a little before we talk to them about, or expect them to understand the topic of the ‘birds and the bees’.

In the same manner, I think at times we expect too much out of our friends who have just become Christians. We need to be careful to not rush them to the meat of the word while they still need the milk and time to grow. We need to not expect right off the bat that a new convert is not going to struggle with sin, or that he or she may not see the need to be at every church service or to dress, act or talk a certain way.

As mature Christians we need to be patient and longsuffering. It often takes a great deal of work to keep a new Christian faithful. When I go for a walk with my small Children I hold their hand as to protect them and to guide them. A new Christian will often need their hand held, they don’t need to be told what to do, but shown and encouraged when they make good choices. I don’t just tell my 2 year old Claire that a car could run her over and then send her outside to play without any supervision. I go out side with her, give her the appropriate amount of freedom, and allow her to get a little dirty as she plays. When I see a car approaching from the end of the street, I will walk over to her, crouch down and hold her while pointing out the car and how dangerous it is. I am going to give her some time to grow before I expect her to understand this concept on her own.

Let us all give our new converts time to grow. We need to make sure that we are not overly critical of things that they do, even when we as mature Christians would never engage in such behavior. Let’s watch out for them, holding their hand when needed and as they grow up in the Lord slowly let them go out on their own. Some of the most rewarding moments in a parent’s life are when he or she observes the man or woman their son or daughter has become. However, we all also understand that when a child is forced to grow up early due to neglect or other reasons that it is often very detrimental to their long term success in life. We need to not expect new Christians to grow up quickly or force them to through neglect. Give them time to grow.