

# BUILDING FAMILY

by Rev. Nancy Humes

***“Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels. (Hebrews 13:1-2 )***

Bob’s and my first Thanksgiving was as a family with 12 – 15 of Bob’s closest fellow airmen. He was in the Air Force when we were first married and we approached Thanksgiving with trepidation. We were barely living paycheck to paycheck so how could we possibly celebrate Thanksgiving? What were we to do? Well, we created family out a rag-tag group of Airmen – and decided to celebrate together. We pooled what money we could scrape together and bought a 10 pound bag of potatoes and a 20 pound turkey at the commissary and then each decided what we could bring from our own stores to share. Bob and I volunteered our home. I volunteered to cook the turkey in our apartment size oven. The turkey was so big it nearly touched the sides and top of the oven! But it was the most beautiful turkey I’ve ever cooked. It looked like one you see in cookbooks — absolutely perfectly browned. We gathered in our living room where I put a sheet on our dining table for a buffet and we sat around card tables and tv trays and

celebrated with an amazing feast of food for our stomachs and love for our hearts. One of the young men was from Hawaii and he kept running outside as it was snowing -- he’d never seen snow before. I don’t remember all the names but I do remember the faces. It was one of the most thankful Thanksgivings I have ever celebrated.

Results: Because we lived in a lot of places, we learned to create family. We gathered with other airmen and their families and found reasons to celebrate no matter where we were. After getting out of the service we still were not near enough to our families to go for every holiday so we created other family from friends and strangers. I love to see that this is a tradition that our children have taken to heart and continued. They open their homes to family and friends, and friends of friends — strangers, to share the bounty of our hard work and love in our hearts.

**MOST GRACIOUS AND LOVING CREATOR GOD, WE THANK YOU FOR THIS TIME OF CONTEMPLATION AND CELEBRATION. WE THANK YOU FOR THE LESSONS OF LOVE THAT CAN BE LEARNED THROUGH SHARING AND SERVING. HELP US TO OPEN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS TO YOU — SHOW US YOUR MIRACLES OF HOSPITALITY. AMEN.**