



## Mama's Here

By: **Amber Welborn**

### Abstract

Might today be life changing for this little one? Will this be the day she becomes part of a family? These questions were the highlight of my shift report on a 2-week-old, premature girl. Soon after she was born, her parents left and never returned. They were young and experiencing many struggles of their own. Another child added to this already broken family was too much for them. They decided to let someone else love and care for this precious girl.

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## Practicing

By Amber Welborn

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**M**ight today be life changing for this little one? Will this be the day she becomes part of a family? These questions were the highlight of my shift report on a 2-week-old, premature girl. Soon after she was born, her parents left and never returned. They were young and experiencing many struggles of their own. Another child added to this already broken family was too much for them. They decided to let someone else love and care for this precious girl.

I watched her sleep for a moment, before beginning my morning assessment. She was beautiful and tiny. She was so comfortable, I hated to wake her. "Good morning, sweet girl!" I whispered, as I do to my own girls. Rubbing her soft hair, she started to rouse. My brain flooded with questions. *Does she know that she's an orphan? Does she long to be held? Does she feel the absence of a mother's love? God, what is going to happen to this baby?*

Despite my questions, it was time to begin my day. I listened to her heart and lungs, felt her pulses, and completed a full assessment. She was too tiny to eat from a bottle without choking and required nasogastric tube feedings. Often babies are fed

in their isolettes, as time to sit and hold babies in the neonatal intensive care unit is a luxury. Luckily, today I had 15 minutes before I needed to assess my next baby. This morning, my charting waited, while I rocked and snuggled this little love on my chest. Her tiny hand wrapped around my finger, and we both leaned into bliss. *God, please send this baby a family to treasure and love her. Protect her from any further pain and rejection.*

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That afternoon, the social worker and an apprehensive, yet eager, couple entered our room. I knew this could be her new family. I rose to greet the couple, introduced myself, and made way for them to see the baby. I was nervous and tense. *Have they already decided? Are they considering this opportunity right this instant?* I wondered. They were anxious, as well.

At first, they gazed at her, overwhelmed by the medical equipment that seemed to consume her tiny body. I explained the purpose of each wire and tube, reassuring them that she was stable. I opened the isolette door for them to reach in and touch her. As the woman leaned in and placed her hand on the baby's back, I heard her speak the sweetest words—"Mama's here."

Yes. Yes, she was! I could breathe again. Gently removing the baby from the isolette, I placed her skin-to-skin with her mother, who inhaled a deep, satisfying breath. "Thank you, Lord," she said.

"Yes, thank you, Lord." I whispered. They sat chest-to-chest for several hours, getting to know each other as a new family.

I was scared for this little one. But, God had written her story long before I'd come to work that day. Words from the Bible offer comfort. Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) states, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" Even in our darkest times, God's plan is unfolding a greater place of grace and goodness. Observing the wonder of God's great plan every day, as we see families come together in times of great sorrow or amazing joy, is an honor. Sometimes these moments are grand and obvious, as with this experience, other times they are more brief and subtle.

As nurses, we experience the high privilege of caring for others in these most intimate and vulnerable moments. I am grateful that I was witness to this miraculous story of hope and love. I imagine our heavenly Father uses such experiences to provide us, his children, with a glimpse of his contentment when comforting us when we are most vulnerable. God privileged me beyond measure as he wrote me into the story of this new family. Those new parents may not remember my face or my name, but I will always remember them.



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