

Appendix D

The Story of Baby Hope

Before Baby Hope was born, while she was still growing inside her mother's body, the doctor discovered that there was something very wrong with her. He told her mom and dad that Baby Hope was very sick and that she would not live very long. He said that she might even die before she was born. Baby Hope's mother and father were very sad, so was her big sister, Nicole. They cried for a long time, and they wondered when Baby Hope would die. Baby Hope did not die before she was born. On a pretty spring day, Baby Hope was born right here at the University of Tennessee Hospital. She was very sick, just as the doctor had said, and they were sure that she would not live for more than a few days. Her mom and dad loved her and held her and rocked her. The doctors and nurses took special care of her, and Baby Hope lived. Her sister Nicole was allowed to come to the hospital to see her new baby sister, and Nicole fell in love with Baby Hope, too.

The days passed and the doctors could not understand how a baby as sick as little Hope could live so long. Finally, they let Hope's parents take her home. First her parents had to learn the special ways to take care of a baby who was so sick, but they paid careful attention and learned everything they needed to know. When they brought her home, they had a lot of work to do to take care of her; but everyone in the family helped, even little Hope's grandfather. They took her with them everywhere they went; to the grocery store, to church, to soccer games. Everywhere they went people knew about little Baby Hope, who was so sick that she could not live very long. Lots of people prayed for her and her family, and lots of people helped.

Her mom said that even though Baby Hope could not see, she would listen for her father's voice when he came home from work, and sometimes she would smile. She loved to be held by her big sister. Her father said that everywhere she went, Baby Hope seemed to fill people with love. As the weeks went by little Hope did get sicker and sicker. She didn't eat as much and it became harder and harder for her to breathe. One night, while her mother was holding her, she died. Everyone was very sad that Hope had died, but everyone was very happy that little Baby Hope had lived for a little while.

Doctors learned many things from taking care of Baby Hope that will help other children someday. After Hope died, her mother found some friends who decided to help her make special little caps for other babies who were sick. Sometimes her mother would visit other parents whose babies were very sick to help them. All the people who knew Baby Hope's family and saw how much they cared for her began to care for their families with even more love. Baby Hope lived much longer than the doctors thought she would; still, she lived only 59 days. She had a very short life, but she did a lot of important work in that very short life. God had a very special plan for her. No one who hears her story will ever forget Baby Hope.

Baby Hope's father, Rick Mount said, "I don't regret the years she did not live. I am as proud of her as if she had grown up and graduated at the top of her class at UT."
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This is a true story, paraphrased from articles published in the Knoxville News Sentinel on July 3, 1988.