

# Family Getaway



## *Making Our Home a Haven*

*by Pam Holton*

To understand the story of “Camp Holton,” you have to understand my philosophy on being a stay-at-home mom. This begins with my passion for family and my belief that a woman is doing a wonderful service to her family to stay at home and raise the children. Of course, some women do not agree for various reasons, and that is okay. But, in my humble opinion, there are few more important decisions a woman can make than staying home and raising her family. We just aren’t at our best physically and emotionally when we are tired, stressed, and worn out from a full day in the office.

When my husband, David, and I started our family, we knew that we wanted to raise Godly children into Godly adults, and we wanted to keep our marriage strong. This, of course, takes lots of effort and time, so we decided that I would be a stay-at-home mom. We believed this would allow us to fulfill our wishes for our family. In prioritizing family in this way, we began creating an atmosphere of love and togetherness in which special time was given to sharing in each other’s lives and encouraging one another.

One example of special times we’ve shared are mealtimes. We have always made an effort to eat together as often as possible, and we’ve always made a practice to not let anyone eat alone in our home. Even if one of our three children was going to an event and had to eat early, someone would sit with that child and talk—no television, just talk. During our mealtime conversations, we have had life discussions, looked things up in the encyclopedias (before computers), laughed, encouraged one another, and told stories.

Another example of our special time together has always been our family poems. Ever since our children were little, we have written poems to accompany each gift we’ve given them. Some of the poems are funny; some are riddles; and, some are tender and sentimental. We laugh; we ponder; and, sometimes, we even shed tears. Writing poems is a tradition that we’ve had for years and have passed on to other families.

These types of special activities and our commitment to quality family time have combined to create a loving and

encouraging home for our children. In fact, it has been such a special place for so many years that we finally named it "Camp Holton." We decided on this name when our daughter, Bree, kept coming home during off days from her job with American Airlines in Chicago. As a flight attendant, she could fly home any time she wanted, and so she would often end up here to relax. Her dad eventually began coming home from work and asking, "OK. What's been going on at 'camp' today?" Bree and I would report that we had done things like shop, go out to lunch, sun bathe down at the lake, drink ice tea on the deck, and talk.

I have thought many times what a privilege it has been to be available to spend time with Bree on her visits. I have also been available for our middle son, Robb, who became diabetic five months after our family moved to Clemmons from Atlanta during Robb's junior year of high school. We spent time together in the hospital and going to diabetes clinics, where we were educated on giving shots and adjusting his diet. I spent hours checking labels in the grocery store for carbs and

sugars and hours listening to Robb cry out, "Why me?" If I had been working outside of our home, I might not have been available when Robb called me from Elon College several years later to ask me to meet him for lunch because he had something important to tell me. Dave and I met him to celebrate his announcement of being in love for the first time.

If I had been working outside our home, I would also not have been available to help nurture the budding musical talent of our third child, Marc. With band and orchestra practices, musicals, concerts, competitions, and each Fall's marching band season, I sometimes wished we lived in an RV so that I could do chores and cook dinner while on the go. Marc is now a music education major at Wheaton College.

As our children have aged, "Camp Holton" has also gradually evolved into a place where our kids and their friends can find respite. In fact, as the kids' friends caught on to calling home "Camp Holton," they began asking what we do at camp. So, my husband actually came up with an itinerary. It always had

"sleeping late" for the college crowd and some rather general suggestions that had to do with relaxing. Games and pranks have added to camp fun, and, of course, mealtimes have continued to be a special time. Having special guests at "Camp Holton" has only made our table livelier and richer.

Today, "Camp Holton" has progressed to having business cards and camp shirts for all our family, including our daughter-in-law and son-in-law. Everyone has a title that denotes their talent from the Lord. We have a newsletter that goes out before our annual beach trip, which officially begins the summer camp season. And, we have an activities schedule for our vacation week. Do we follow the activities schedule? Sometimes! But, whatever we do, we do together. The name "Camp Holton" only reminds us that we are a family centered around Christ and each other. "Camp" is a safe and fun haven. Even when life's trials are raging, we are joyously praising the Father for His great miracles and answered prayers.

"Camp Holton" is the best thing we could have ever

stumbled into by the grace of our wonderful Heavenly Father. We didn't know how to raise a family when we were first married, but the Father has lead us all these 31 years. He is the one who put into my heart the passion for staying home and raising our three children and being a wife to my wonderful husband. And, speaking of my husband, he is definitely a wonderful Camp Director and God's wonderful gift to me and to our children.

©2002 **Pam Holton** and her husband David have been members at Calvary Baptist Church for many years. Pam is active in Calvary's Elder Care Ministry.