



## By Sister Natalie Pezzenti

I don't know about you, but college is hard work. Attending early morning classes. Trying to stay awake during what feels like never-ending night classes. Studying for exams. Studying for midterms. Studying for finals. Memorizing that foreign language speech. Writing that term paper. Reading chapter after chapter in that huge textbook with small print. Meeting up with classmates for study groups. Often working at a part-time job in between. It really can be exhausting.

Big things are thrown your way when you decide to attend college. Whether you commute from home or move hundreds of miles away, the stresses are often overwhelming. And let's face it: in

those daunting moments, God often feels far — oh so far — away.

The challenge becomes finding a balance — remembering to include God in the big things — but even more importantly, remembering to include Him in the little things.

### **Making a Tiny Effort**

I chose to attend Ohio University in Athens, Ohio for my journalism degree. Athens is three hours away from my home in Cincinnati; three hours from my parents; three hours from my friends; and three hours from church. Driving back and forth every weekend wasn't an option for me, so I made a pact with God the moment I stepped foot on campus my freshman year.

“Lord, I know I'm going to get stressed from time to time over the next four years. I'm going to feel alone and I'm going to need your help. I'm hoping others will see something different in me. And most importantly, I want to take time to grow closer to you.”

What did I do to keep up my end of the pact you may ask? Here are a few things:

1. I joined a Christian service sorority on campus and spent much of my four years volunteering around Athens. I served breakfast at midnight to those less fortunate; I visited elderly women in a nursing home and gave them manicures; I even scooped some oh-so-smelly stuff at a local horse rescue farm.

2. I still made the Sabbath day holy. No, I didn't get to worship with other saints in Athens, but I started every Sunday morning by reading scripture. I made it a priority to read from two of my favorite books before cracking a textbook open.

3. I picked a day to fast and pray each week — and guess what — sometimes, I didn't fast from food. Sometimes I fasted from TV. Sometimes I fasted from texting. And gasp! — sometimes I fasted from Facebook. I made a conscious effort to spend time focusing on a specific prayer and got rid of any distractions, as best I could.

4. I stayed involved with TCOJC: I was a part of your very own SSP committee; I put money aside each quarter for gas/hotel/food so I could drive to Greensburg for General Church Conference each fall and spring.

Were those efforts huge? In my book, not really. I wasn't traveling across the world to do missionary work; I wasn't teaching Sunday School each week or preaching a sermon. My efforts were small, but they were efforts nonetheless — and God saw them!

Whether it was volunteering or praying, calling another brother or sister, or reading on my own, I made time for God — and I know He made time for me. Like Psalm 16:8 says, *"I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."* And little by little, I found myself seeing Him in small moments of my day: I'd notice His creations when I'd walk across campus; I felt the prayers of the Saints whenever I wasn't feeling

well so far away from home; I'd get a call from someone in my branch when I'd least expect it.

And you know what the beauty of those little things and small efforts was? They weren't just little things to me. They became big things!

How special do we feel when someone remembers our birthday? Or perhaps sends us a care package while we are away? Or maybe you receive a "just because" card in the mail — or someone writes on your Facebook wall to let you know you crossed their mind. Whoever it is that remembered, they clearly knew you would appreciate a little something. Guess what? Our God is the same!

Our God is a god of love — and more importantly, our God is a god who pays attention to the little things. As they say, it's all in the details! In Psalm 103, it says that *"He knoweth our frame"*; and in Luke, he writes, *"But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."* If He can remember those minute details, and we already know without a doubt He hears every spoken and unspoken prayer, what makes you think He won't remember the big things, too?

### Turn Small Into Tall

College is tough. And I hate to break it to you, but life after college? Well, that's tough at times, too. That's why it's imperative that you find joys in what God gives you daily — that you remember what James said: *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse*

*temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."*

Make time for the Lord. Find time to talk to Him. Include Him in your life, just as you would a roommate or friend. Remember that He's always around, that He is in the breeze you feel in the fall, the smell in the air each spring. He gives us those "little moments" to experience so we don't get so bogged down with the stresses of our academic careers.

And remember: *"... thus we see that by small means the Lord can bring about great things"* (1 Nephi 16:29).

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