

## Home for the Holidays

As I look to my left and across the street, I see the lights in my neighbor's front yard. He has really worked hard this year to put up the 'Christmas lights' and decorations. It is the same as you drive through our small community and our entire city. It is indeed a festive time of the year. In fact, I really like this season of the year. Why? Because it is when most families can be together. The young father across the street is especially happy this year because his wife gave birth recently to baby boy. Now the older son will have someone to play with – in time. I have so many fond memories when our four children were all at home during this season of the year. There were occasions when the older boys and I would go to some friend's farm and cut a 'Christmas tree.' Virginia and I would really enjoy seeing the children opening presents on Christmas morning. Virginia would have a delicious meal prepared, which would be consumed by our very hungry group. Those were precious years when the children were young and were at home. How fortunate you are if you have sweet memories of family gatherings.

Now, we look forward to the children returning home with their families. It is something else when our tribe assembles in one place. It seems that we 'wear the house' because the space is so restricted. What a wonderful sight to see grandchildren opening presents on Christmas morning. What a mess to clean up! How much food is required for so many hungry mouths waiting to consume grandmother's delicious meats, vegetables, salads, pies and cakes? Well, it doesn't matter. Her love reveals itself in the joy she experiences when she cooks for those who are so close to her heart. After all, what are grandmothers for? We want our grandchildren to have pleasant memories of Papa and Ma's home during the holidays.

The Christmas – New Year holidays provide a break from the everyday and sometime mundane affairs. People tend to be kinder and friendlier. Friends get together and enjoy festive occasions. Parents attend seasonal musical programs at school. Old friends are remembered as well as new friends with Christmas cards. Certainly, everyone needs a new tie and/or underwear to wear. Ah, life is good. So enjoy this festive time of the year with your friends and loved ones. Yes, remember those family members who have gone before, but don't permit those memories to rob you of the blessedness and happiness of the present.

A New Year's wish for you: "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2).

*By Raymond Elliott*