

Tompkins and Bischel: Creating a bond with adoptive family

Contributed by Gale Tompkins and Dave Bischel
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On Christmas Eve our daughter gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Seth, at Sutter Lakeside Hospital. Seth's birth was made even more special because it was also attended by the parents who are adopting our grandson.

This wonderful couple, Todd and Betsy of Seattle, Wash., were chosen by our daughter from a large pool of adoptive parents who were registered with Open Adoption and Family Services (www.openadopt.org/).

Our daughter, too young to parent her child, picked this couple for several key reasons: they had no other children, the mother would be staying home with the baby, the baby would be breastfed (yes it is possible for any woman to lactate – even one who has never been pregnant), and he would be uncircumcised and unvaccinated. Additionally, Todd and Betsy match our family values, politics, spirituality, interests and personality types almost to a T. We have all grown to love each other so much – the connection seems almost magical. At the hospital, Dr. Jesse and the amazing staff of caring and professional nurses such as Suzin, Diana, Lorena, Denise and others, made the whole process unforgettable. The staff was supportive of Seth's adoptive breastfeeding, and gently and lovingly assisted in making sure Betsy was given the earliest opportunity to breastfeed her newborn son. They accommodated both adoptive parents throughout the entire hospital stay, including cots, blankets, snacks and, of course, kind words of explanation, encouragement and celebration. Our deepest thanks to these beautiful people who day-in and day-out help to bring tiny life safely into our world and also protect the self-esteem and confidence of the laboring mothers. Thank you also to Pastor Shannon Kimbell-Auth and her husband Michael of United Christian Parish, who lovingly donated their extra car for Todd and Betsy to use during their entire one-month stay in California. And thank you to the entire congregation of United Christian Parish for their kindness, support and prayers during our family's adventure with teen pregnancy. Dr. Davies and his staff were also tremendously supportive and made every prenatal visit an uplifting experience. Our daughter was always treated with respect and kindness. We are so grateful that our daughter chose to do the responsible thing after making the mistake of becoming pregnant as a teenager. Her choices have resulted in a baby receiving handpicked parents, as well as the additional heapings of love that come from the closeness of all involved families through open adoption. We have not lost a grandson. On the contrary, we have gained an entire extended family that joins us in our love for Baby Seth. Our daughter is a true hero; a selfless girl turned woman who grew up fast over these last nine months and truly learned that every little mistake is actually part of God's bigger plan. New Year Blessings to all; especially to precious Baby Seth, home now with his parents in Washington. Gale Tompkins and Dave Bischel lives in Kelseyville. Tompkins is the Lake County La Leche League volunteer leader. Please call her at 277-0846 if you have questions or need help with breastfeeding.

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