

At the Lunch Counter Today

Today eating lunch at a local diner I became aware of a group of people sitting to my left. Most were women who seemed to know each other but not from work. They may have been family as there were a couple of kids with them. One, a young boy, who was busy trying to sit still like his mother had told him to and, another, who I found it hard to turn and look for. You know when you hear those sounds, the ones made by a kid who has developmental delays, how you want to see where the sound is coming from but suddenly you are aware that even the kindest smile and turn of the head to look could be taken as anything but positive? Those were the sounds I was hearing - unclear expressions that only the trained ear could make out the meaning of.

Taking the family out to eat at a restaurant or BBQ joint is an experience. I mean, Corban is not one to sit still for long. Often he is up and moving about and I think would gladly work as a host, escorting customers to their tables. Unfortunately most people who come in to eat prefer to be seated with just their group and not made to join a table, of people that they don't know, where the meal may already be in progress. Corban doesn't seem to know boundaries like that one. My son is many things; annoying, happy, sad, beautiful, distracted, energetic, excited, unable to complete words or sentences that no one but the trained eye and ear could interpret. He is often loud, sometimes making a very high pitched shrieking sound and on one such occasion as he and I went into a BBQ joint in Muskogee, Oklahoma during the lunch hour he demonstrated this very high pitched shrieking sound six or seven times in succession which drew the attention of everyone who was waiting to be seated. As they turned and looked I got him to stop at shriek number 6 or 7 and then held out my hand for a high five and said, "Good job buddy." then turning I said to the closest guy who was wearing camouflage so that all in the shrieking area could hear, "We've been practicing our predator calls. He's got the dying rabbit down pretty good don't you think?" Some smiled, some smiled in bewilderment, and then they went about their business. I think I remember having to kill the dying rabbit call one more time before we got seated.

My son is many things but embarrassing is not one of them. You know he has all the characteristics of being embarrassing but there is just something about him that, it just ain't happening. I think the main reason is that...Corban is my son and I love him. Now, I've seen the looks before, people who turn around and look part way over their shoulder from the booth where they are sitting as if to say without saying it, "Someone is making annoying dying rabbit sounds and my wife and I would like to eat our brisket sandwich in quiet smokiness if possible." I notice most of those looks, some I don't see, none of them matter much to me unless I can make it into a meaningful learning experience for them.

So today I sat at a local diner eating lunch and as unnoticeable as I thought I could, I turned to see a young girl in her late teens or very early twenties sitting with the group of women. She was trying to talk and that is where the sound was coming from. I could feel the tide of emotion swelling up in me as I thought of her and my son and then me and my Abba. I must be quite a sight to Him. I go out with Him and make noises that only He can make out the meaning of and I am dependant on Him no matter how hard I try to do things on my own. Still He kindly cares for me and loves me as I am. He doesn't try to cover up who I am but tries to make me into what I am to become. And the best part is...I am never embarrassing to Him...because He loves me.

Blessings,
Brian

Corban is eight years old and has hemiplegia. He enjoys riding his three-wheeler around the neighborhood. He's been a brave survivor of two brain surgeries to stop seizures. He loves life and has so much to share with us all. Corban's dad opens his heart and share his faith.

You can email Corban's dad, Brian at bherrian@sbcglobal.net

To learn more about hemiplegia, hemiplegic cerebral palsy, or hemiparesis, visit the [Children's Hemiplegia and Stroke Association](http://www.chasa.org) website at <http://www.chasa.org>

To read more of Corban's stories, visit the Hemi-Kids support group website located at <http://www.HemiKids.org>

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