

THE POWER OF BROTHERLY LOVE

From *Chicken Soup for the Soul - - Twins and More*

It wasn't too long before I was pregnant and Teddy insisted that these were the twins he had been praying for. But my doctor, who had extensive experience with my pregnancies and their outcomes, assured me it was a singleton. He was a rare gem, this doctor, a family practitioner who also did obstetrics, but as a GP he didn't have an ultrasound machine in his office. And without seeing "shadow pictures" to prove that there was only one, Teddy refused to relinquish his dream of twin babies. Every night we heard the same thing: "And God, please send us..."

The rest of the children were excited about a single new baby because he or she would break the tie between three girls and three boys. They would take turns talking to my belly encouraging the life within: "C'mon, be a boy" or "Girl...girl, you know you want to be a girl."

Whatever the sex, the baby was big. But my other babies had been big, too. I asked the doctor again, "Are you sure there is only one?" He spent an extra 15 minutes palpating before giving me his answer. "Yes, there is only one."

Still, Teddy's faith in God's answer never wavered. And my faith in my doctor never wavered until...one night at 36 weeks, I felt the baby hiccupping under my rib cage. Then I felt the baby hiccupping at the base of my spine - - at the same time and in a different rhythm. Yes, one baby can fool a mom and her doctor by being especially big and especially active. But one baby cannot hiccup in two different places at the same time.

My doctor arranged to have a high-risk OB give me a sonogram at the hospital the next week. For almost an hour, I lay on my back while the tech tried to count ulnas and femurs. Finally, they pronounced the decision - - I was having twins.

They were born six days later - - one boy and one girl. The first night we were home together, saying bedtime prayers, my husband and I were stunned to hear Teddy add his usual petition: "And God please send us..."

"But, Teddy," we exclaimed, "Your prayers were answered. Even though everyone kept saying there was only one baby, we really did have twins!"

He shook his head. "Yes, I know, and I like them just fine. But they're not the ones I asked for. They're not identical."

After ten more years, he has finally given up that prayer. I can't shake the hunch that he is going to get those identical twins eventually...But they're going to be his children, not his siblings.