

an alumni open letter:

...to those needing something to lean into

Dear Returning Student,

Hello and welcome home! How are you doing? My hope is that this letter finds you well. And maybe it has! You're feeling confident in moving forward, ready to bring what you learned into your regular life. You're excited to tell your friends and family about your summer and to hear about theirs. You're looking for opportunities to further growing in your faith.

But maybe it hasn't. You're overwhelmed; you're confused. You're not sure what's next. You're feeling discouraged and alone. You're questioning why you just spent your whole summer away from home with a bunch of strangers.

No matter where you stand on the spectrum, or even if you're swinging from one end to the other and back, know that you're not alone. And you're definitely not the first to feel and think all of these things.

My name is Ellie, and I have been there. I have felt those emotions. I have asked those questions. Each of my three times returning home from a summer with Royal Servants was different. But what I learned to lean into each time is the same: God has not changed. His faithfulness to answer big prayers has not diminished. His grace flowing over every area of sin and brokenness has not dried up. His goodness to provide energy and rest at just the right moments has not been left behind. His power to change lives has not disappeared. His holiness has not faded. His love has not retracted itself. His way to salvation has not been closed. His willingness to use you for His kingdom has not changed. He is the same—eternal and immense, worthy to be praised.

So, in a way of sending you on, here is a prayer for you in whatever comes next and in whatever you're feeling these days.

Abba, Abba

You are our God. Faithful to our wayward hearts. Joyful in our allegiance to your name. Patient when we do not know which way to go. Urging us forward when we seek your heart. No matter our circumstances or lack of understanding, our hopefulness or our excitement to follow you: you are the same. You keep your promises, and because of that we place our hope and trust in your character.

Thank you for all of the mighty ways you worked this summer. Thank you for stirring our hearts to see the world the way that you see it and for challenging us to participate in your restoration work. Thank you for each of the students, staff disciplers, senior staff, and leaders you used for the advancement of your kingdom. Thank you for sending Jesus to become man so that all of this might be possible.

Encourage us through your word and through one another as we are sent back into our "regular" lives. Strengthen us to seek you daily. Give us wisdom in moving forward with school or work or ministry opportunities. Provide us with what we need; you know better than we do exactly what that is.

We trust that even now you are still sovereign over our lives, preparing us and watching over us. We praise your holy name.
In Jesus' precious name,
Amen.

You've got this, dear friend!

Your sister in Christ,
Ellie