

Move In Day

Each fall is the perennial move-in day on or near college campuses. Legions of parents descend with carloads that include tiny refrigerators, Ikea furniture, electronics, area rugs, and posters. They unload the one they have birthed, raised, nursed, instructed, and reprovved for eighteen or so, to prepare him or her for independence. Then, just like that, the parents are gone, perhaps wiping away tears. Perhaps their final words were ones they hoped would stick. “Study well.” “Make good choices.” “Watch your time.” “Don’t stay up too late.” But in every parental heart is a simple prayer: “O God, be with them.” In the final portion of Jesus’ great prayer for the disciples (John 17:6-19), he entreats the Father to love and protect the disciples as a parent who knows their time for direct supervision is coming to an end. In this preparation we hear his pleading like a loving parent who wants the best for the ones he has sheltered, taught, loved, reprovved, and sent. Jesus begs for God to hold them in the truth that is to do as they have been taught, to follow the model established for them. Jesus asked for the disciples to be protected and surrounded so that they may not be lost. He prays for the disciples to have their joy completed, and to live what they have seen and understood from their rabbi. May we, like the disciples, live in the truth of the gospel, love as we have been loved, have our joy complete, and, above all, know that God is with us.

