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Community Church of Vero Beach

All God's Creatures

Our daughter is considering a career in veterinary medicine. She's an animal lover, and we couldn't be prouder. To love and care for all God's creatures, great and small, seems to us a noble fulfillment of God's command that we are to be earth's stewards. Although there are only a few of us with the special training to care for the medical needs of God's creatures, we like to think that the millions of us that have certain special animals in our homes and our hearts are also fulfilling the command to care for creation. Do you have special animals in your life?

Our special animal was named Copper. We purchased him from a breeder somewhere in Wisconsin. He was one of fifteen puppies available for adoption the day we visited the breeder. We looked them all over with amusement as they ran and tumbled, tussled and tangled. But we knew we'd found the right one for us when we saw Copper. What struck us were his eyes. When we looked at him, he looked right back at us, eye to eye, head slightly cocked, and the bond was sealed.

Copper was a golden retriever, and he became our best friend. When we lived in the north he enjoyed the cold. On frigid, sub-zero mornings he would run to the end of the driveway to fetch the newspaper for us. This only became a problem when he couldn't find our paper and took the neighbors' paper instead, so that he wouldn't have to come back empty-handed (or more accurately, empty-mouthed.) He also perfected the art of chasing geese away from the pond. And he became an expert at shagging golf balls. He seemed to have a sixth sense about the quality of the balls. He quickly returned the X'd out balls to us, but never seemed to want to give back the Titlist Pro-V's without a good long chase. But Copper's most incredible talent was perceiving our moods. When our spirits were down, for whatever reason, he simply sat at our feet, as if to say he hoped his friendship and presence would be of support at this difficult time.

Well, though we enjoyed many years with Copper, we saw him slowly age and finally pass away. We grieved, of course, because we missed his funny, gentle, and sensitive presence. But a friend directed us to a poem about a dog by Dale Turner which conveys a vision for Copper's future (and ours) that gave us joy and comfort. This is the poem:

"I've explained to St. Peter I'd rather stay here, outside the pearly gate.
I won't be a nuisance, I won't even bark. I'll be very patient-and wait.
I'll be here and chew a celestial bone, no matter how long you may be.
I'd miss you so much if I went in alone, it wouldn't be heaven for me."

There is certainly some mystery surrounding all that God has planned for us for eternity. But we, like many of you, are hoping and praying that the four-legged creatures we've come to love and cherish so deeply will be a part of it! God bless you and your animal friends.