

December '07

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in the Lord. We have been blessed with hardship this year. God has shown us the depth of our weakness and strengthened our hope in Him.

- Moving in ...

After our move in January, we eventually found our way around Parramatta. It wasn't long before Nathan had to travel into Newtown every day for college. Adjusting to the new pattern of life was challenging and it was difficult to stay in command – that is, in us determining our own life pattern rather than the business of life.



Everything was new at this time; exciting but difficult. Nathan found college challenging and we were all struggling to find how we would fit into this new place.

- Difficulty settling in ...

There was an unusual amount of sickness in the family this year. At one stage we couldn't remember the last time we were all well. This made life stressful. We all felt the pressure; it was hard for Nathan to keep up with study and for Maki to get out and build new friendships.

And so we felt very isolated. Around October we were in the depths of despair and at the point of giving up. We were saddened by many things at that time. But praise be to God who intended this experience for good: We thought more clearly about what genuine Christian community is and we were strengthened in hope – in the face of our own weaknesses in all aspects of our lives.

- Newtown Baptist Church

Newtown Baptist Church has been very supportive and generous. We have enjoyed and been encouraged by the small congregation. In fact, we feel that we have got to know people at church the most. It was a little disappointing that the distance to Newtown kept us from the evening prayer meetings and Maki from the women's events.

- Holidays '07

We visited Maki's family in Japan around August. Maki's mum came all the way from Japan to help Maki and the kids on the plane. They returned and stayed for 4 weeks and Nathan joined them for the final week. It was good to spend some time with Maki's family, but it was hot and difficult in a small unit with the kids.

- Next year

A week after our deliberation to continue on and find accommodation closer to college next year, the college offered us a place in Newtown. This news lifted our spirits and we are now in the process of moving. Praise God.

- Prayer

Please pray that we would remain faithful to God; for our health next year; and that we ourselves would be hospitable and welcoming to those around us.

Peace (shalom as the Hebrew at the top says) and grace be with you,
Nathan, Maki, Samuel and Ian Clapham.

Pictures and updates are available at www.claphams.info.