Daughters of Naomi

Questions to Ask While You Still Can

A gentle guide for gathering your parent's stories and wishes.

The most valuable things in your parent's home are not the furniture or even the jewelry. They are the stories, the ones your parent carries in memory that will disappear unless someone thinks to ask. You can always replace furniture. You cannot recover a story once the person who carried it is gone. — *Becky*

How to use this. Sit down at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee and ask one or two questions at a time. Let it be a conversation, not an interrogation. Record it with the voice memo app on your phone if they're willing. Their voice telling the story may become the most treasured thing you keep.

PART 1 · THEIR STORY

Where did you grow up, and what was home like?

How did you and Mom (or Dad) meet?

What are you most proud of in your life?

What was the hardest season you went through, and what carried you through it?

What hymn, song or Scripture has meant the most to you, and why?

What do you want your grandchildren to know about faith, and about life?

Is there a family recipe or tradition you want us to keep going?

What do you want us to remember about you?

PART 2 · THE THINGS THAT CARRY STORIES

Item · The story · Who should have it

Ask about two or three specific things that seem important to them. Write the answers down.

PART 3 · THEIR WISHES

If you couldn't live on your own anymore, what would matter most to you about where and how you're cared for?

What do you want us to know about your wishes for medical care near the end of life?

What would you like at your service: hymns, Scripture, who speaks? Is anything already arranged or paid for?

Wishes written here are precious, but they aren't legal documents. Make sure medical wishes are also in a living will, healthcare power of attorney or POLST form, and that your family knows where they're kept (see our File Box Checklist at daughtersofnaomi.org/checklist).

PART 4 · WHAT I WANT YOU TO KNOW

Not a decision to make or a problem to solve. Just something you want your parent to hear from you, while they can hear it.

"I notice how hard you are working. I see what you are carrying.
I love you, and I am not going anywhere."