

Haití Happenings

Shaina Thiner

“I do not occupy myself with things too great and marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother...”

Psalm 131:1b-2a

Please continue to pray:

- 1. Protection over our people as they serve in Haiti during a time of great instability.**
- 2. For open hearts and good relationships established as the ministry grows in the Dominican Republic.**
- 3. For wisdom and clarity as decision are made for people in both ministry locations.**
- 4. For the means to continue providing for all those under their care in Haiti and the DR.**
- 5. For peace for Haiti and its people.**

Dear Family,

Whenever I have come across this verse in the past it has confused me. I didn't understand how the example of a child who now needed his mother *less* could possibly be used as an illustration of our relationship with God. But this time it hit me: when a toddler is weaned it doesn't mean they are in *less* need of their mother...instead it is a different need...a less frantic need...a more relational need. Less crying, but more words spoken to communicate need. Less physical bonding, but often more emotional bonding. As a child grows, his or her dependence on their parents becomes deeper because they learn that their parents are in fact able to provide them what they need, so though their needs may become deeper as well, those surface, frantic, survival needs are just expected, assumed.

I realized that this is a perfect picture of how our relationship with God ought to be as we grow in Him. Not that as we grow spiritually we should need Him less, but that as we grow to know Him better and deeper, the more we know and trust He is going to provide what we need, so when things seem out of control or hard to understand our reaction isn't to panic but to let go.

This is a hard one for me. I don't handle change well, and feeling out of control sends me in a downward emotional spiral every time if I am not careful. Realizing that every time I become frantic over my circumstances is reverting to the infant-like mentality of my first years with God is quite sobering. I know it doesn't change how He feels about me, nor how He will receive me every time I come to Him with anxiety, but it does affect how I view myself and the growth of our relationship.

I chose this topic for this letter due to developments in and related to Haiti of late, and not for the good. Nothing like being an ocean apart from people you once lived among and being unable to do absolutely anything about their plight. Talk about an opportunity to let go and let God.

Though I can't go into detail about things (for privacy of individuals and for time and space), I ask that you please lift our people up fervently in prayer. While the ministry in the Dominican Republic (among Dominicans and Haitian refugees alike) is growing and inspiring, we still have a work going on in Haiti, and so many there about whom we care deeply. Pray for the government and for all other governments with influence over them to make decisions that are about the people not their own agendas or pockets. Please pray that Jesus would be proclaimed and accepted.



My apologies that it has been so long since I sent out an update! I don't typically think to share news about myself, but whenever I happen to run into any of you it seems that is what you would like to hear, so I'll do my best to oblige this month:

Shaina - My transition to becoming a wife and step-mom has been so smooth I almost can't believe it, still. I love everything about who I am and what I do and am grateful that with all the changes in the past couple of years so many have been wonderful ones. Besides continuing my work with BHM, I also took a part-time music teaching position at the two schools in our district. I love our church family so much, and relish my roles there as well.

The family - Matthew is a leader in our church and community in so many aspects, from pastoring (and all that involves!) and leading our Wednesday night program with the kids, to coaching, town responsibilities, and ministering to those in need, to our most exciting development this year: opening and running a food shelf for the surrounding community.

- Jude is a junior in high school, Xander is a freshman, Silas is in 7th grade, Asher is in 4th grade, and Eden is in 2nd. They are all heavily involved in sports (football, basketball, track, baseball) which keeps us very busy!

Between pastoring and teaching, sports, and all our community involvement it is difficult to get away, but we do our best to make time twice a year to take a family vacation and let the kids experience new things. Our favorites lately have been laser tag and escape rooms.

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