

THE ENCOURAGER

"He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us." 2 Corinthians 1:4 (THE MESSAGE)



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ABOUT ME: *I am a Landscaper living in Orlando, FL. This is a monthly e-newsletter intended to encourage you in your faith. I am currently attempting to become a published author. Next month I hope to begin releasing excerpts from my first fictional novel, ASYLUM.*

Thanks for reading this issue. Feel free to email your comments and suggestions to me at:

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Encourage your friends and associates to be added to my monthly emailing.



"WAIT-TIME" How Well do you do that?

We had just finished breakfast at the campsite; and only had one more mile to hike, on the last leg of our church backpacking trip, in the Smokies. Just five minutes earlier, four of our campers had headed up the mountain trail for the cars. A friend, who would later become my wife; told me that these guys had just left and that I could easily catch up.

Being young and impatient I took off after them. Eight hours later, I found my group- after being lost in the woods for an entire day! Someone, (who will remain nameless,) forgot to tell me about the arrow in the sand directing us to a side fork in the road. So you ask, "Have I ever been backpacking in the mountains

Please see rest of Wait Time article on pgs 3 & 4

HANDLING STRESS:

Richard A. Swenson, In his book; The Overload Syndrome and Margin, offers the following suggestions for combating stress:

- * Value sleep.
- * Anticipate—and relish.
- * Set boundaries.
- * Tune out ads.
- * Subtract from your needs.



"Now I can see that the seasons of waiting that once sapped my spirit of vitality can also be God's gift to revitalize my soul. "Those who wait for the Lord," Isaiah promised, "shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Is. 40:31, NRSV This quote was taken from the editorial staff of Discipleship Journal in the article WHILE YOU WAIT, 2009 edition

* Set an earlier ETA.

(Est. Time of Arrival)



Banana Coconut Pound Cake

Source: Post-Gazette and "The Peppers, Cracklings, and Knots of Wool Cookbook"

1- 1/2	cups	butter, or 3 sticks margarine
3	cups	sugar
6		eggs
1	teaspoon	salt
3	teaspoons	baking powder
3	cups	all-purpose flour (very loosely packed)
1- 1/2	cups	sweetened, flake coconut
1/4	cup plus 2 tablespoons	milk (I used 1 cup milk)
3	very large	very ripe bananas (we used only 2)
1	tablespoon	pure vanilla extract
1	tablespoon	coconut extract (we used banana extract)

- Cream butter until light and fluffy. Gradually blend in sugar and mix well. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Combine salt, baking powder and flour in a bowl.
- In a food processor or blender, purée coconut in milk. (Perhaps our grinder wasn't strong enough, but the coconut never got fluid enough to be mixed until we added more milk.) Add bananas to coconut mixture and process until bananas are also pureed.
- Add dry ingredients, mix well and pour batter into lightly greased tube pan; and bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 1 hour and 19 minutes.

"10 Questions to ask to make sure you're still growing:"

Are you more thirsty for God than ever before

Are you more and more loving?

Are you more sensitive to and aware of God than ever before?

Are you governed more and more by God's Word?

Are you concerned more and more with the physical and spiritual needs of others?

Are you more and more concerned with the Church and the Kingdom of God?



Are the disciplines of the Christian life more and more important to you?

Are you more and more aware of your sin?

Are you more and more willing to forgive others?

Are you thinking more and more of heaven and of being with the Lord? Jesus?

"Wait-Time," Continued from page 1

By Tony Gulledge

again?" No.

Maybe you're just like me? You say, "NO I would never get lost in the woods." Perhaps not, but eventually everyone finds themselves in a position of having lost total control. A doctor mentions the word cancer and fear seizes our minds. Or my adult son relapses again in his struggle to be done with drug addiction. Even such simple things like road detours, school bus loadings, and more than ever red lights can stress us out. It's in times like these that we have to learn the art of waiting, AGAIN!

While trying to find my way out of the woods several thoughts crossed my mind. First someone would eventually start looking for me? I didn't need to be frightened, did I? Why was I so thirsty? If there were really six separate trails out here surely I would soon run into someone? Then why was it so quiet?

Just what does one do while waiting to find their way out of the woods? 1. Pray. 2. Think logically, 3. Conserve water and energy. 4. Look for a stream. 5. Ditch the garage bag you've have been carrying all morning. 6. Try to remain calm. 7. Did I mention pray? When you're in a pickle like this; all alone, have no map, compass, or person to ask directions from, THEN we have no other choice but to call on God. Why do we wait make HIM our last choice when He is omnipotent?

If I'm waiting for a table in a restaurant or a plane to take off at the airport; once someone can give me a wait time, I can calm down and adjust. (Well, ok may not if I'm waiting in one of those endless lines at Disney World.) Bottom line it all comes down to a decision of acceptance to wait. In anxious times, it helps me to consider that the delay may be divinely orchestrated. It could be an occasion to make time for others. However, nurturing a connection with people always takes time and energy. It's inevitable. If you slow down long enough to re-direct and give to others attention; people will pass you by and even get ahead of you. That's ok. Isn't it worth the investment?

Several years ago while doing field work as a disability case manager; maps and back roads became my closest friends. My glove compartment had city maps for most every small town in Central Florida. Even my backpacking fiasco had helped perfect a now excellent sense of direction; and enlighten me to the many benefits of solitude.



Like Paul in Romans 8:38, I know now that “nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death, nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love.” (NLT)

During one of my scenic route excursions, I persuaded my family to stop and have breakfast in the backwoods town of Live Oak. The only vehicles parked in the packed family restaurant, were pick-up truck each equipped with gun racks. On that freezing cold morning, nothing tasted better than a hot breakfast and fresh brewed coffee. The food and coffee were delicious; however, their clientele were more than entertaining!

When we take time to embrace a divine delay; God can often surprise us with a magnificent sunrise, peaceful mountain stream, brilliant rainbow, tranquil lake, tropical beach, moonlit evening, colorful fall leaves changing, the relaxing pace of a winding road, or a delightful walk in the woods. He can refresh us through a short train journey or time spent exploring abandoned barns or farm-houses. Even running through a field of wildflowers can invigorate and awaken ours dormant senses.

So make the most of your wait time. It helps me to remember Issiah 30:18: “ So the Lord must wait for you to come to him, so he can show you his love and compassion. For the Lord is a faithful God. Blessed are those who wait for his help.”