

ARTICLE FOR COUNTRY GAZETTE

June 14, 2005

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Waiting is something we don't much like to do. Whether we work or play, there is so much we want to crowd into our days. Waiting in the dentist's office, or for a report from the doctor are particularly difficult. A few weeks ago a group from our church went on a mission trip to the Blackfeet Reservation in Browning, Montana. We were on Indian time there. Not much, if anything, started according to schedule. Vacation Bible School was late, meal time with the homeless people stretched from one meal to the next. Adjustments had to be made in the construction plan when materials didn't show up on time. It was a good exercise in patience. *Slow down, you move too fast. Gotta make the morning last*, goes the song by Simon and Garfunkle.

Patience, we read in the Bible is one of the fruits of the Spirit. We should thank the Indians for their help in developing patience in us. Wait a minute...patience is not always good. We need to be responsible, to be able to meet deadlines. Sometimes we need to be able to take action quickly and to respond to immediate needs. We should not be patient when injustice is being done, when injury is happening, when we see wrongs being perpetrated. To size up a situation quickly and be decisive can be just what is needed. Still, in our culture, I think we err too often on the side of impatience.

An article in the Seattle Times (June 12, 2005) reported the results of a study by the National Institute of Health published May 2 in the American Journal of Cardiology. According to the study meditation helps us live longer. Participants in the study who meditated twice a day for 20 minutes had a 23 percent lower death rate from all causes and nearly a third lower death rate from heart disease than those who did not meditate.

Meditation is waiting. It is waiting on God. We spend much time and money on exercise, so that we can be healthy and live well in our physical bodies. It is also important to exercise our spiritual capabilities if we wish to live well. Patiently meditating, waiting, waiting, waiting... because God will not be rushed.

Meditating can take place as we contemplate nature, as we sit in a sanctuary, as we listen to quiet music, as we read scripture or pray in our bed. We can meditate even in the dentist's office, slowing our breathing and remembering words of scripture that free us from anxiety and draw us closer to our Lord.

Summer is coming. Slow down. Waiting can be a good thing.