

## A New Arrangement

Since my teen years, I have greatly enjoyed the process of rearranging furniture - perhaps not the physical aspect of it, as much as the recreation of something old into something new. I love the feeling of sitting in a "new" room, all clean and organized; the feeling you get when you move to somewhere new but without the hassle of boxing everything up. Mike and I have been in our place for about eight months now and I was beginning to feel the itch to rearrange. Kind and loving husband that he is, Mike agreed to help; and so we took on the task of rearranging the suite.

We spent five hours shifting furniture and knick knacks around our two bedroom suite and it seemed like the more we tried to move stuff and make it fit perfectly, the more mess we made and the smaller our place became. We just couldn't seem to get it right and it was starting to show in our temperaments. We were snipping at one another and you could feel the fight coming, building in the tiny spaces between our ill-fitting furniture. Finally we couldn't do anything but stop! Mike and I both stood back and took a very deep breath scanning the room and taking a moment to relax. After about 5 minutes we tackled the job again and suddenly everything slid right into place. It was really amazing. Suddenly, I understood one of my favorite Psalms better than ever before. Psalm 46 says,

*"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."*

Often in life, we spend so much time trying to arrange everything in our lives to 'fit' perfectly. We run from here to there, work three jobs to pay the bills, and be the good parent, spouse and child, while trying to fit in time to relax and have a social life – to say nothing of finding time to work out, eat right, and reach the unattainable goals of beauty and perfection thrust upon us daily by the media. Are you overwhelmed yet? Are you tired of trying to rearrange all the stuff into too small a time space?

I was tired as I tried to stuff all the furniture into my little place. I became so frustrated that nothing felt important anymore. I became stressed and worried and took no joy in a process that I normally loved. I realized in that five-minute break what it means to 'be still'. I realized that something would have to go, that not everything would fit into the space that I had. I realized that we would have to take stock of what was really important and then dump the rest.

As we try to cram all the "furniture" into our lives we often find that we have too little time and energy to complete all the tasks we set out to accomplish. And yet we don't stop when we hit the wall, do we? We scramble and fight to climb up and over, pushing ourselves to the

very edge of sanity. With nerves frayed, at the end of our ropes, we half-heartedly go about our lives feeling that nothing is really important anymore. We find ourselves lashing out at those we love, the pressure and anger continuously building within us. There is no more joy to life, no more passion, no more excitement; only the endless drudge of an overfull life.

But what if it didn't have to be like that? What if things could fit into the time and energy that we had? What if we could rely on someone else to guide us and give us energy, to clear the way and help make the pieces all fit together so that once again we could take joy in our daily tasks? What if you lived every day knowing that you are called to the tasks you are taking on and, when things get stressful, there is always someone to turn to, somewhere to lay down your burdens, and be still?

This is what Psalm 46 is all about. Through the words of the psalm, we are called to take refuge in our God, to lay our worries and burdens at His feet. We are told that we have a place to dump some of that stuff we carry around with us that just doesn't fit. God himself tells us to "Be still and know that I am God." God wants us to rely on Him and go to Him to help us rearrange our busy lives. God wants us to let go of the things that do not give us life. He asks us to take a five-minute break to look over our lives and to take stock of everything we cram in. My prayer is that you will be able to find joy and rest through this beautiful psalm; that you will be able to look to God, take a breath and rely on our Heavenly Father to fit things into place, so that you may know the fullness and joy that life has to offer - that life was meant to offer under God's great design. Through Psalm 46, we are called to take a step back from the hectic pace our lives take, let go of those things that don't fit, can't fit and are not good for us. We are called to be still, take refuge and rest firmly....

In His Grip,

Pastor Karen Seifert