

For a Season
Thursday, February 25, 2010

I was visiting with a member of our church recently. They are struggling. It is because of number of issues that seem to have come together in a perfect storm. They are tired and drained.

As I listened to them describe the hurt and the pain, I found myself touched and moved. It brought to mind times in my life when I have struggled. One of the things that has helped me get through times of difficulty is a phrase my mother used to like to say, "This, too, shall pass."

It was a phrase that has helped me to realize that life is often broken up into seasons. There are some seasons, like summer, that are beautiful and fun. Life can seem easy in those seasons. Life can feel like a gift during those seasons. This is when I feel strong and able to help others well. When I am in a season of life that feels easy and good, I am often thanking God for the gift of this moment.

I have also come to see that there are seasons that are more difficult, much like winter can be. Those times when just about everything we do feels hard. Those moments when we feel tired or weak or not really capable of carrying on. When I enter a time like this if I can envision it as a season, then I can remember that it won't last forever. It will be for a time.

The challenge for me is to put into place all those pieces that will help me live through the challenge of the season. So I work at things like having intentional time with God for reading scripture / prayer / and journaling. This discipline helps me to ask my questions of faith to God and learn from how God has acted with the faithful people of times past. It helps me to learn to trust God with my fears, my doubts, my worries and my life.

A second piece that I work at putting into place is to surround myself with friends who can help me, encourage me and be honest with me. I have learned a long time ago that there are moments when I just need to check my thinking out with others. Especially if I am in the midst of a time where I am struggling, it is important for me to lean on people I can trust to help me. I have even learned that there are times when it is really important to even seek out a counselor to help with things that I may be struggling with.

A third piece that I work at putting into place is to make sure that I am taking care of myself through exercise and good nutrition and getting the rest I need. While I know that these things are important anyway, the reality is that sometimes I am not good at taking care of myself. So when I am in a season of struggle, I work harder to focus on how to take care of myself.

What about you? What has helped you get through times of struggle? How has God and your faith helped you through it? What pieces of support do you get mindful of, when

you are in the midst of a season of struggle? How can you be intentional in your faith and your life as you work through this challenge?

Our faith has taught me that God loves us deeply, not only when things are going well, but also when times are a challenge. It is just more difficult to remember that we are loved by God when challenges mount. My hope and prayer for you, is that if you are in a season of challenge today, you will be able to learn to lean on God once again, to regain the hope and support you need to face these challenges.

In the hope Jesus offer us,

Rev. Scott Carlson

The Mission of Sun Prairie United Methodist Church is to invite and welcome people to be committed and compassionate followers of Jesus Christ through worship, through spiritual growth, through fellowship and through service to others.