

AUTUMN 2016 SPIRITUAL DIRECTION CHECK-UP

I am deep into a season of waiting.

Waiting for my phone to ring and my inbox to fill up with requests that will put flesh on the bare bones of my 2017 calendar.

Lord knows I am available.

I could start to feel nervous. Instead, I feel joyful.

I am deep into a season of missional waiting. Waiting for the work that comes forth from the marrow of my bones. The work I cannot *not* do.

The work for which I have come into the world.

You no doubt know this kind of waiting, because you too have work for which you have come into the world. Work which does not always reveal itself when you are feeling most ready.

Twentieth-century priest-theologian and writer Henri Nouwen notes that waiting was the attitude of the biblical remnant of Israel. In the opening of the Gospel of Luke, Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary all are waiting for fulfillment of a promise.

They “live expectantly,” Nouwen writes.

Addressing our own experience of waiting, he continues, “People who wait have received a promise that allows them to wait.” Or as I like to say, have received “an invitation.”

Waiting, which can seem like empty space, actually is open and active space, allowing for an attitude of holy and joyful patience.

Nouwen writes, “Patient people dare to stay where they are,” living actively in the present and waiting there, “nurturing the moment as a mother nurtures the child that is growing in her.”

The spiritual beauty of waiting is in giving freedom to your future to reveal itself at the proper time. Not clutching the outcomes you can imagine, but allowing the hidden seed to mature into its proper time of revelation.

In practical terms, what is this waiting like for me?

The opening phrase of my prayer each morning is: “Your servant, Lord, your servant am I.”

The servant does not know what the Master is up to, Jesus says.

This servant does not even want to know what the Master is up to. Knowing is not the helpful thing; rather, readiness is.

In this season of waiting I am deeply sure of one thing. Deeply sure of my anointing to stand in the place of the Master. The anointing is not in vain.

Therefore I know that my waiting is not in vain.

*Questions for reflection ...*

1. Am I in a season of waiting? What am I waiting for? Does it feel big enough, or “missional”?
2. Does waiting energize me? Drain me? How would I describe this season of waiting?
3. How does this season of waiting shape my prayer? Is it anxious prayer? impatient? Is it full of trust? expectation? Is it joyful, even?

I urge you to work deeply with these questions. Enter into conversation with them.

And feel free to bring them into our holy conversation in upcoming spiritual direction sessions.