

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 10/14/2022

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

In Exodus 17:8-13, we read the following narrative:

⁸ The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. ⁹ Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of GOD in my hands."

¹⁰ So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹ As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹² When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. ¹³ So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

I share this because I think it is a good reminder that sometimes we need the help of others. It's easy to get into the habit of always doing things ourselves and thinking we don't need anyone else to assist us. Yet, the truth is we all need aid and support from time-to-time.

In the above story, the Israelites have left Egypt and are moving for the first time toward Canaan, the land promised to Abraham. The Amalekites have made a practice of raiding those whom they believe to be vulnerable—travelers, the weak, the poor, and so on. Now they see this enormous crowd of people marching through the wilderness and figure those on the fringe and trailing behind will be easy picking. But GOD gives guidance to the Israelites in order to protect them and keep them safe. Joshua is called to lead a force against the Amalekites and Moses shows his support by holding up his staff for the troops to see.

But Moses grows tired. (How long can you hold up your arms at one time?) So, two of Moses family and friends come to his aid. They place a rock for him to sit on where the Israelites warriors can see him and then they hold up his arms to continue to encourage the fighters. These two who are providing aid are Aaron, Moses' brother, and Hur, who tradition says was the husband of Moses' sister, Miriam. Moses would not have been able to complete this important task of holding up the staff of GOD without the aid of Aaron and Hur. Though we usually think of Moses as being able to do just about anything GOD asked him to do (think of Charlton Heston holding up his arms to part the Red Sea), Moses need help.

There is nothing wrong with requiring help. And it can be a good thing to allow others to assist us. Years ago, my parents were going to have lunch with my cousin, Verlaine, where she lived in Rochester, MN. Verlaine was a single mother who worked hard to provide for herself and her daughter. My parents knew that Verlaine had limited resources, so my dad made sure that their server at the restaurant gave the check to him so he could pay it. Verlaine, however, was crushed. My parents were her favorite aunt and uncle, and she had saved up just to be able to take them out. After she told me of her disappointment, I talked to my dad and reminded him that sometimes, the nicest thing we can do for someone else is to let them do something nice for us.

The same is true when our time comes to need assistance. Though we don't go out of our way to make it so someone has to come to our aid, we should recognize that there will be times when the help of another is necessary. This is most often the case over health issues, but can be true for other needs as well. Throughout our lives, we offer service and support to those around us and have found joy in doing so. Yet, we forget that we, in turn will need the help of others. When that time comes, we should rejoice in the provision GOD is offering through those who share their relief and support to us. We should also recognize that, in our need, we are giving them the opportunity to also have that joy of contributing assistance. We can also take delight in knowing that we are giving someone else the pleasure of serving as they help us.

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey