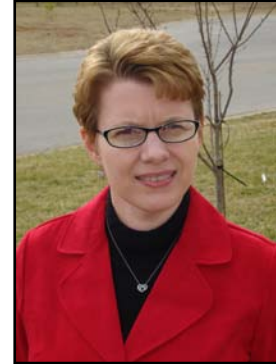


## Minding His Presence

By Susan Gregory, Clarksville, Tennessee

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She returns from the airport and instructs her children to occupy themselves while she spends some time alone. She slips into her bedroom, slumps onto the bed and curls up to consider, what do I do now? Her husband has just left for a one-year unaccompanied tour overseas. It will take him over 13 hours to get to his destination, and only the Lord knows how long until she hears from him, telling her he is safe on the other side of the world.



It is early Sunday morning, she has plenty of time to wallow in this self-pity. Or, she can Army girl up and get herself and her children to church. Her decision will play a vital role in how the next 365 days will play out.

As she considers her options, she begins to ask, "Where is God?" Surely He didn't intend for her and her sweet husband to spend so much time separated. Their love for each other is firm and goes deeper than anyone can imagine. They have surely become one in Christ in their twenty years of marriage. She never counted all the missed birthdays and anniversaries. She refused to live this life as a victim of her circumstances and she refuses to start now.

Knowing the Enemy is powerful and all he needs is a small foothold in her life, she cries out to God, "Hold on to me, dear God. I'm too weak to do this on my own, my strength is gone. My emotions are waging war within me. Give me Your strength to do what's right."

Knowing her prayers are heard in spite of her feelings, she picks herself up off her bed and says to her children, "let's get ready for church." With every laden step she knows her actions are pleasing to God. She is leaning on Him with all her will, to not only make it through this day—the first of this deployment, but every day. She knows her God will not leave her comfortless. She is holding on to the truths found in His Word.

As one day turns into one week, then one month, she is able to begin counting down to her husband's return. She chooses to live in the presence of the Almighty. It is a conscience effort every day to acknowledge that God is with her on this journey. To live knowing that her prayers are being heard by the God of the universe gives her strength and comfort to face whatever comes.

You see, she's been to the bottom of her pit. That place we've all been at one time or another. Where we wonder, is God really with us? Does He see our sorrow? Does He hear our despair? Does He acknowledge the tears we shed? Oh, sweet lady, I assure you, no matter what your pit looks like, no matter how deep you think it is. God **IS**. God is there.

Just as He heard the prayer of King Hezekiah as he lay on his death bed, even acknowledging his tears, know that the same God sees your tears (2 Kings 20: 4-6). He hears your cries and He knows that you have walked in truth and you have lived with a loyal heart to your Maker. Don't let your weakness, or your shame stop you from calling out to the God of heaven. He loves you, dear one, and He longs to give you comfort.

Zephaniah 3:17 says, "The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love. He will rejoice over you with singing."

Even though King Hezekiah waited until the death angel was upon him before he cried out to God—God heard him. Yes, God heard the prayers of the prophets and the people of Judah for Hezekiah, but it wasn't until King Hezekiah himself cried out to God that God added 15 years to his life. Sometimes the prayers of the pastors and the saints can't do what our own voice crying out to God can do. Acknowledge God is in your midst, call out to the Mighty One, He will save. Allow Him to rejoice over you with gladness. Wait for Him to quiet you with His love. Then, listen for the singing.