

## *Some Quiet Times*

Some of the very special moments in my life were spent with my father, and I was between the ages of three and six. They were the times, in particular, when he asked me to accompany him into town from our farm outside of Cookeville, Tennessee. We rode in a horse-drawn buggy.

Mostly, these were occasions of reflection for my father. There was something comforting and emotionally healing for him in the rhythm of the horse's hooves on the roadway. These were difficult days for him as he tried to raise a family in the years following the Great Depression. World War II was raging overseas, and it appeared that he might be called to leave his wife and two young sons to join the battle.

The ride to and from town, when the only job he had was to handle the reins of the horse, gave him much-needed opportunity for meditation. The two of us didn't talk much; although I was just a child, I sensed his need for quiet contemplation. He always seemed to be refreshed and renewed from those trips. The travels into town to do business gave him a respite from the harsh demands of running a family farm.

Our world has changed significantly since those days. Trips into town, or anywhere, aren't made by horse-drawn carriages. Automobiles require our constant attention with the speed and congestion we encounter on almost any thoroughfare. All the time-saving inventions that have come along are supposed to give us more leisure time than ever before. Regrettably, the opposite seems true.

We communicate with cellular telephones, e-mail and fax machines, and they bring a chaos all their own. The deadlines imposed by our work or the dictates of a personal lifestyle keep us running from one appointment to the next, taking on one challenge after another, too busy to turn down invitations to be involved in one more good cause. In the process, we pay a substantial price.

Just as was the case with my father, it is imperative that we set aside some time alone to reflect on our dreams and goals, about whom we are and what we are doing. In those periods spent in solitude, the soul is nourished and renewed. We are allowing God the opportunity to speak to us through His Holy Spirit, and to commune with Him in sweet, sweet fellowship.

Time alone doesn't just happen. We must make an appointment with ourselves – carve out those personal retreats from crowded agendas – in order to be quiet, unwind, meditate and listen to God's voice. Maybe it's walk in the outdoors, or playing soft music or engaging in prayer. The result will be a renewed focus on what is truly important. Then we can more fully enjoy the present as we prepare for the future.

--Beecher Hunter