Learning to Wait

By: Debora Bailey

*“But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.” Romans 8:25*

“Debora you have to learn how to wait your turn”. I remember receiving these instructions from my mother as our family was playing some kind of game. I feel I was about kindergarten age, perhaps. My thought was “Thank goodness I have time” and hopeful that I would understand how to play this game when it actually was my turn. I needed that waiting time to learn, to absorb the structure of the game and to see my part in it. Apprehensive, timid, hopeful, watchful with eyes and mind open, I waited.

I am perhaps in 5th grade, standing in a line with my team on the playground. We are playing a game of Kick Ball. Gosh, I think, I hope I will get a turn to kick that ball. I loved Kick Ball. I was good at it. I knew how to connect with that ball. I was a fast runner. I had been sitting all day waiting for recess, and now waiting in line to “Kick that ball”, to connect and send it flying far enough away to allow me time to run those bases. I wanted to have the most release possible before I had to return to my day of sitting. Eagerly, with great anticipation for my turn, I waited.

Standing in another line, as a sophomore, inside the UGA Coliseum, armed with the class descriptions and schedules, my ID, and a list of several possible alternative classes that I would have to take if my class of priority was full. You would start with that class of priority and build your schedule around it. I prayed that that all important key pin class might be open….and it would be ever so nice if it was at a reasonable time. It was a hot day of waiting in lines. Long lines. Waiting for the fate of your life for the next four months to come into being. Nothing was in my control, all was an unknown. I yearned for the time when I would be a senior with a determined major and have priority. My path would be clearly defined, the choices few and no line would be necessary. But until then, the waiting was tense, patience was tested, calm focus was necessary as the future was unclear.

I stood in the corner of the small ER room. Out of the way of the people and machines gathered around my husband who they were working on, yet in sight of them, as they surrounded the gurney he had been wheeled in on. I hear them say “Stand Back” and then I hear the noise of the machine whose purpose was to get his heart back into a proper sustainable rhythm. I had no sense of time. I recall thinking, “Why are you so calm Debora?” Yet, with no control over the situation, I had a strong sense that everything was going to be all right. Russell was going to be just fine. I imagine God had control of my mind and body at that time. I was not witnessing this event alone. God was with me, His spirit was alive within me, sustaining me.

The lessons of waiting are never completed. The times and events of waiting are too numerous to count. This seems to be one of life’s challenges not to be overcome, or endured, but to be accepted. The Bible calls for us to wait with hope, wait in faith expressing itself through Love, and as we wait the Holy Spirit works.

*Prayer:* Father God, help me to be mindful that my task while waiting is to be loving. Actions of love will resolve any inner conflict created by the waiting. Amen.