With God in the eye of the storm

May my cry come before you, o Lord; give me understanding according to your word. (Psalm 119:169).

Years ago, one of our student friends got married before all of us. After some time, we had a small reunion and shared snippets about our lives. We wanted to know everything about married life and she told us many things. The one thing she told us that I remember best of all was: "God showed me that when my husband comes home, I should be a harbour in the storm for him, rather than a storm in the harbour!"

Is your life creating a storm or are you like a haven?

As women we are often under a lot of pressure and much is expected of us. We are the first ones to rise and often the last ones to retire. Today God is asking you and me the same question: Is your life creating a storm or are you like a haven? You do not need to be married to desire or cultivate this quality in your life. The following thoughts will hopefully inspire you to realise the importance of 'time-out with God' in the life of a woman. Time-out with God causes us to breathe again, to think straight and most importantly, to hear God's voice clearly on the very issues that often drive us to become a storm, even sometimes a destructive tornado! The only safe way to weather the storm, is to find the eye of the storm and in our case this means time-out with God, entering into His presence.

Change the way you view time

1. Quiet time

It is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Start by setting 30 minutes aside at least once every two days. Have a notebook at hand and just begin to write down the things on your mind. After writing them all down, start praying about them. The more often you can take this time out, the more peace will come to your heart and mind as you pour out your heart to God. I find writing my prayers down helps me contemplate God's opinion and I receive clear guidance on the issues I bring before Him. Something else might work better for you, but at least try it for 2-3 months.

2. Fasting

From food if that is how the Holy Spirit directs you. BUT – more than anything though – stop running around! Change your habits, if necessary. Take a deliberate decision to walk and not run, to finish your tea before doing the next thing. In essence: SLOW DOWN! I know we can do three things at once, but try doing one at a time for at least one day a week. Even when we just slow down in our physical actions, more peace comes into our hearts. Doing a little bit of planning of our daily activities will also not hurt.

3. Bless someone
It does not need to be an elaborate action. When you pass by your husband, kids, a friend, or a colleague at work, just quickly place your hand on their head or shoulder and say, 'Bless you'. Thus you bring them to a standstill for a moment, they think about God, wondering why you did something like that. Except for that, it is a good habit and it makes you an obedient servant of the Lord Jesus! (Num.6:24-27). Ask God to show you how you can do acts of kindness without it taking up a lot of time or effort. You can also bless people silently when you pass their offices or pass a school, or you could bless people like your children and friends in prayer, even if they are not close by.

4. Time-out
It is not always possible, but see if you can take a day off or set half a day aside at least once in six months just to pray and worship God. Try to arrange this with your husband, family or friends. Go to a place where no one will disturb you and switch off your cell phone. Take your Bible, a notebook and some worship music or your musical instrument. Begin your time with God by writing down the things on your mind or things that bother you. Then go into a time of extended worship, for as long as your heart desires. Now begin to praise the Lord for His goodness and take care to write down what He shows you from your time of worship. Spend the rest of your time in simple extended reading from your Bible and praying for things that come to mind.

5. Keep it up
Take care of yourself by taking time-out with God regularly.

6. Give it up
Which are the things that wear you down most? Take time today and write them down. Search your Bible for God's promises regarding fear, doubt, strife etc. Now write down these promises next to each of your concerns. Begin to speak the truth of God's Word over your life. Declare, according to the promises of God, the life of God, the truth of God and the love of God over your challenges and problems. Lay them down at His feet and when you find yourself carrying them again. Lay them down again until you are completely freed from these burdens. As new burdens come up, add them to this list. Whatever you do, do not let them remain 'un-prayed' about!

Prayer
God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ, I dedicate my time, my body, my mind, will and emotions to you. Please help me to slow down, to bless others, to take time out with You and to give up and let go of those things wearing me down. Teach me Your ways which are higher than mine. I desire a deeper relationship with You Lord Jesus, please show me the way. Help me plan my time and give me wisdom on how to spend my energy in a way that will glorify You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.