

Resting In The Palm

Focus on the Family Web Magazine

A few years ago I fell in love with a beach cottage named "Barb's Folly." I adored the designer beach décor of stripes and floral prints, the screened in porch that spanned the back of the house, the inviting dark green rocking chairs, and the weather worn dock jutting out over the lazy canal. As if imported from England, a 6-foot square of grass was nestled in one corner of the white picket fence in the back, with blooming myrtle bushes, a weathered bench, and a cozy bird house. In the other corner of the yard, the owners had transplanted a palm tree, just a few inches from the second story screened in, wrap around porch.

On our first night there, we rocked on the porch and watched the fireflies dance under the moonlight on the canal. At one point, a moon beam fell across the palm tree and I noticed something stir. When I moved closer, I discovered a turtledove had built her nest at the top of the thatched tree trunk, where the palm branches spouted upward. Because we were on the second story, we were at eye level with Mrs. Turtle Dove. When I moved closer to her, she didn't budge, but sat steadfast in her perch.

Early the next morning, I went on the porch to spend some time with the Lord and Mrs. Turtle Dove was there to greet me. I rocked. She watched. Our eyes locked. We both blinked. Then, around 8:30, Mr. Turtle Dove flew in and perched on the stair railing. They exchanged coos and after a few moments, he flew over to the nest. When she stood up to welcome him, I notice two tiny eggs peeking out from under the stubble. It seems this was Mother's Morning Out. She flew away and Daddy bird took over the incubation of the offspring for his lady love. After a brief time, she returned and Daddy bird went off to work for the rest of the day.

During our entire vacation, the momma dove did one thing and one thing only, she rested in the palm, warming and protecting her two tiny charges. On the afternoon when a violent storm blew through with loud claps of thunder, crackling flashes of lightening, and pelting sheets of rain, she just sat there, resting in the palm, undaunted by the storm. When children ran up and down the stairs, inches from her nest, she just sat there, unalarmed by the activity. While other birds such as cranes, pelicans and sea gulls performed great feats swooping gracefully into the water to retrieve their catch of the day, she just sat there, undeterred from her calling.

On the last morning of our vacation, I was having a final cup of coffee on the back porch. It was just God and me and Mrs. Turtle Dove, staring, blinking, and wondering. I believe God puts various situations in front of us for a reason.

"God," I asked, "what do you want me to learn from watching this mother bird this week? I believe you put her and me together for a reason."

Then He spoke to my heart. It was contentment. I was watching a picture of contentment in fulfilling God's call. The contentment of a mother doing what God had fashioned her to do during this period of her life. Regardless of the storms, regardless of what other more seemingly important birds were doing around her, regardless of the endless stream of activity passing by her nest, she was unmoved from her calling.

"Is that it, Lord? Is that what you're showing me?"

Sharon Jaynes

Bringing God's Truth
To Today's Women

Just as I prayed those words, Mr. Turtle Dove came in for his daily visit. When his lady dove stood up to fly away and I notice a piece of eggshell attached to her leg. I peeked in the nest and there lay two tiny downy hatchlings. The eggs had hatched and it was as if God was saying to me, "Yes, Sharon. That's it. This has been my gift to you this week. You have seen a contented mother and the results of her commitment. You do what I've called you to do. Rest in the palm of My hand. Don't get distracted by the world and all the activity going on around you. Be undaunted by the storms. Be relentless in your call. And in due time, I will cause your "eggs to hatch" and all too soon, they will leave the nest.

About that time, my six-foot-one teenage son sleepily stumbled out onto the porch. I'm not sure if he saw the tears in my eyes as I looked at his ruffled hair, sleepy eyes, and a face that needed a shave. "Hey Bud. Look." I said. The eggs hatched today."