

~ Spiritual Practice ~

Establishing Stability amid Change

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After four moves in five years, I wrote a book entitled *Married and Mobile* to help other trailing spouses realize they weren't alone in the seemingly endless migration from place to place. That was many moves ago. Some of us seem destined to be permanent newcomers. How do we establish continuity and stability in our faith lives when we're so often relocating?

Even if we manage to stay at one address for many years, other aspects of our lives may change. Neighborhoods—and neighbors, work assignments, and family members can all be in flux. Finding satiability in the midst of chronic change can be daunting.

Living with change isn't new. Early in Genesis we read that Abraham and Sarah migrated far from all that was familiar to them. Three generations later their great-grandson Joseph, against his will, was shipped off to Egypt by his jealous brothers. Abraham became the founding faith father of three major world religions. Joseph eventually became a highly trusted and respected Egyptian leader. While we might prefer fewer changes in our lives, Scripture assures us that God works through people in the midst of change.

Trusting that God will go with me, I've developed some devotional habits I can take wherever I go.

- I keep my devotional things in a wicker basket that I can easily transport from home to home. When I unpack it and place it on a familiar end table next to a favorite chair, I am ready to begin one familiar routine.
- I keep a collection of favorite daily devotional books that I reread every few years. Seeing how life seems to go round in circles rather than in a straight line is comforting.
- When I travel, I carry a devotional book in my carry-on bag, handy for breaks on a long trip or in the daily routine once I reach my destination.
- I also keep a journal and sometimes read old entries, which remind me that situations or emotions I'm facing now have occurred in some form earlier in my life.
- In every new place I seek out places for solitude and prayer. Some of my favorite mini-retreat places are libraries, parks (sometimes just a pocket park with a bench and garden), and nature trails.
- When I travel I seek out airport chapels. Rarely do I encounter anyone else using them. If others are there, they too are looking for a quiet place to mediate.
- Churches often leave their buildings unlocked, welcoming those who pass by to pause and pray during the week.
- A car makes a great portable prayer space when parked away from traffic.

Staying with familiar spiritual routines may take a little time and discipline, but creative thinking should yield ways to maintain habits that nurture our spiritual well-being, regardless of the changes around us.

Ultimately, any long-term stability we'll know in this lifetime comes in staying focused on Jesus Christ—the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

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