


Partnership...

beloved far zeal practice feed give thirsty bless affection possible drink thought genuine hope sight brotherly peaceably love one patient prayer hungry weep saints tribulation constant needs hospitality depends noble contribute good hold live God overcome honor serve another harmony will rejoice Spirit

—Romans 12:9-18

SOUTH FLORIDA  HAITI PROJECT

## Lenten Reflections

— a Journey of the Heart

### Week Four... Be Present

*Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited. —Romans 12:15-16*



Have you ever felt your heart ache to help someone suffering— be it physical suffering or grief of a loss or painful relationship issues—anyone hurting? And just not know what to say or what to do that will help them? Feeling helpless to ease their pain? Over the last 4 years since my husband was tragically killed crossing a street, the importance of this verse in Romans has been experienced deeply. There is often nothing anyone can say to ease another's pain— the solace more often comes from someone genuinely caring enough to just simply be present. To weep with those who weep.

The ministry of presence is perhaps the most basic way to show respect... to care for... to love one another by simply being present... even in silence... and just share a smile or tears. It's not necessary (or even desired) to have any solutions—just simply be present. It sounds so simple and yet is so rare.

During my first visit back to Bondeau 3 months after my husband was killed, I experienced the deep abiding power of partnership... presence. This verse became reality in a very deep way as the "Mayor" (elder) of Bondeau took my hands in his and said... we are so sorry for the loss of your husband... *we have been praying for you....* I received something I never even imagined! In the midst of all their every day trials... they were concerned and praying *for me...* the reality of genuine partnership became vivid and personal that day. While I had come on a mission to give to *them...* he had this amazing gift to give me.

The people we serve wherever they are— in our neighborhood, in our family, in far parts of the world, or in our church— they have so much *to give us*. Ministry/love/genuine presence is found in the giving and the receiving— others have much to give— it's not just what we can give them. When we allow others to live out this verse with us, we both receive a gift.

—Beth Shires, South Florida Haiti Board Member & Treasurer

**Prayer for this Week:**

Loving God, you are always present for us. You weep and rejoice with us. May we see with your eyes and hear with your ears to be truly present to those you place in our path. Help us to recognize when you are choosing us to be your presence for someone in need and open our hearts to receive the blessing they also have to give us. We give you thanks for your ever-present love and for all those who share your love to others especially South Florida Haiti Project and the people of Bondeau. Amen.

*South Florida Haiti Project (SFHP), invites you to take a journey of the heart with the community of Bondeau, Haiti. Each week in Lent we are sharing images and voices from our partnership that will draw your heart into our shared Lenten journey. We offer these as a gift acknowledging we are blessed to be a blessing.*

*For those of you not familiar with Bondeau, Haiti and Bon Samaritain ("Good Samaritain") Episcopal Church and School, it is located just over 60 miles west of Port-au-Prince and serves as the anchor and gathering place for this rural, coastal community. Over the last 17 years, the people of Bondeau and South Florida Haiti Project have formed a remarkable partnership.*

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The Power of Rejoicing Together... Bondeau has it!

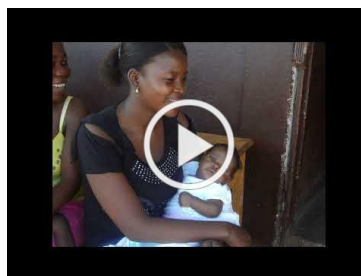


One of the most amazing qualities of our partners in Bondeau is their deep joy and the faith-given ability to draw deep into that well of joy even when circumstances that engulf them seem impossible to overcome. They do not lose hope. Their faithful example of truly living their lives based on the absolute knowledge that God holds them and cares for them is an inspiring model for us... we have much to receive and learn from our brothers and sisters of Bondeau. It is uplifting to be in the midst of their gatherings as they each bring their individual bucket of God-given joy and create a divine pool that refreshes them as a community and any who are blessed to be with them. They know how to *rejoice with those who rejoice*.

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You can feel the joy in the band and the crowd! What a gift to have joy even amid such hardship.

<https://youtu.be/heQrKwolvVg>



Watch this 3-minute video to learn more about the SFHP Partnership with Bondeau.

<https://youtu.be/ShR3ZEI6mJA>

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Every gift makes a difference to a life in Bondeau!

