

## **New Life Family Matters**

### **July 2006**

"Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. <sup>17</sup> The LORD your God is with you,  
he is mighty to save. He will take great delight  
in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." Zeph 3:16-17  
NIV

Summertime in America is synonymous with vacations –that week or so when we break from our normal work schedule and get away for some rest and relaxation. Usually we head off in one of two directions, to either a new place that we've never been to before, or a familiar family vacation spot. The goal is the same no matter where we travel to –we "vacate our normal schedule of work and daily life for a time of refreshing." I'd like to propose to you that as a follower of Jesus Christ, vacationing to enjoy God's creation or to see some of our historically significant locations is truly a blessing from His hand.

America has some amazing natural displays of God's amazing creative genius that will cause wonder and awe to rise up from our hearts in worship to Him. That refocused attention of our hearts has the potential to release His Rest into our hearts and refresh us for our journey on planet earth.

Our favorite family vacation spot is a state park in the heart of the Pocono Mountains of north-central Pennsylvania, named, Rickett's Glen. The focal point of this park is the 21 water falls that can be viewed from a "Y" shaped trail that is over 7 miles long. Two trail heads (the top of the "Y") begin about a half a mile apart high in the mountains taking you along side of Kitchen Creek as it cascades down the mountain. The falls vary in height from 11 feet to over 90 feet in vertical drop. The trails meet at a place named called, "waters-meet" by the native Americans who made their home in this forest of Hemlocks and various hardwoods trees –some as old as 500 years. There are native wild cherry trees that are twice as big in circumference as a man's hug. Every time we vacationed at Rickett's Glen, we hiked this trail and were wowed by God's creation –by the size of some of the trees, the variety of the water falls and by their power. One of my favorite times at Ricketts always happened after supper on the final evening of our stay. We would always hike part way down the trails as the sun was beginning to set and the outside temperature was cooling rapidly –just to see the falls "one last time." It was one of those moments when I sought to sense His presence in the wonder of His Creation. I loved listening to the water as it passed over the rocks and feeling that sense "smallness" and "finiteness." But what I always went to hear on that last hike wasn't a sound heard in my ears, but in my heart. It was the voice of the One who created us and holds our lives in His hand. I loved going on that last hike to experience His presence and His refreshing. Vacations are meant to be time away from our normal schedules for the purpose of refreshing our hearts. I pray that as you "vacate your normal schedule" this summer that you would experience the rest that our Savior God intends for His children -a rest that comes to us through His great love and His joy over us.

Pastor Dave