

GOD'S SUSTAINING LOVE

Isaiah 50:4-9

Friday, April 5, 2019

"The Lord has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that 'I may know how to sustain with a word 'him who is weary.'" Isaiah 50:4

On December 8, 1997 my husband's wife (Deb) was killed in a traffic accident.

I met Deb's husband (Rick) in August 1997. I worked as a Nurse/Patient Advocate at a local hospital. He was Chaplain there. My responsibilities and the Chaplain's responsibilities often crossed over as we offered support for patients and families, working in collaboration to provide spiritual and emotional support.

In January Rick was back at the hospital visiting members of his congregation, His grief was evident as he went about his responsibilities. We would see each other from time to time and I expressed sympathy for his wife's death. I was thankful for the Bereavement Certification I received in 1997. God began using my understanding right away as I offered support and a safe place for Rick to share his emotions. God had given me a "tongue of those who are taught".

Fast forward, four-hundred-eight days after Deb's death and I became the "other woman" in my husband's life. I was not prepared for how his grief would affect me. Rick's grief became our grief. There was no sorting the yours and mine of it. The grief was ours.

My heart broke as he slumped to his knees and let out guttural anguish over the sadness in his heart. Knowing that he had to process through his grief was no less traumatic. His emotions erupted, he slumped over exhausted, as I prayed for God to give him strength to empty his heart of the hurt and pain and use me to bring healing.

I could see God's sustaining attention and strengthening presence in this grief process. I have had an "open-ear to God" since I was a teen and His language of strength and encouragement flooded my own heart and poured as balm into the wounds of Rick's grief.

Days evolved into weeks and weeks into months. The deep sadness began to wane and waver. Today, we do grief seminars to offer the same hope of God's sustaining attention and strengthening presence to those in the dark days of grief.

Prayer: "Lord, help me to have an open-ear to your voice. Use me to bring a small patchwork of healing into the world through your word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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