

Mr. Mom

Kathleen drove back to Iowa to see her mom shortly before her mom passed away. Here is an account of my experience that I wrote several days after she left:

I really haven't tried to do much pastoral work this week, so I'd guess the last four days (has it really only been four days?) is pretty typical of what Kathleen experiences all the time. The exception, of course, is that I have the hope of her coming back soon. So where I am only playing Mr. Mom for a few days, she has another 17 years or more.

I've been trying to do it all: quick runs to the grocery store, laundry, cleaning, schooling, comforting, etc... Several generous people have made us meals, so I'm not experiencing the full weight of mommy-hood, but I think I'm getting the picture. It's quite a job. At one point I was frantically running through the house trying to find my shoes so I could take Keziah (age 5) to the Emergency Room. All kinds of thoughts were running through my mind. "Should I leave the other kids alone while I go to the E.R?" "Can I call a neighbor?" "Do I have time to gel my hair?" (Hopefully I'm not that vain, but I had just gotten out of the shower.) It didn't even occur to me to call 911. I guess the little edible robots the kids made with toothpicks, marshmallows, and licorice weren't such a great idea. (To my credit, I didn't let them put toothpicks in the robots made for the smaller two kids.) Thankfully, she coughed up the toothpick before we made it out the door.

Another time I was pretty much at the end of my rope after Malia (age 3) missed the potty. I actually did okay with cleaning it up and all, but then later she was squirming around when I was putting her new pajamas on and I just about lost it. I didn't actually yell at her or do anything to her, but I admit, I most certainly felt like going berserk-o. What can I say? I've got testosterone issues. I'm just kidding, of course. The issues were not testosterone issues, but character issues. Actually, I was pretty discouraged by the whole event because I would like to think I'm a little more mature than that. God help me!

Then there was last night, or this morning, or whatever you want to call it. Jireh (18 months) woke up at 1:00 screaming. I dragged myself out of bed and got him some milk. That helped for a good five minutes and then he started at it again. I let him cry for another ten or fifteen minutes and then I went down to comfort him. Of course, two fears ruled my mind. First of all, what if he has an ear infection? Secondly, what if I can't get back to sleep? After thirty minutes or so of cuddling him and singing "Jesus Loves Me," I put him back down. Another thirty minutes or so and I was free to go back to sleep. That was several hours ago, and instead of lying in bed I'm writing all of you. (Maybe that's that whole thing about mommies wanting some adult companionship.) Anyway, of course the discouraging part of it all is that they're all going to start waking up in two hours. I've got a whole day ahead of me with very little rest. (That should really help my irritability issues, huh?)

The verse that comes to mind is Matthew 6:34. It says, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." I don't need to worry about tomorrow (or is it today now?). God will give me grace. He gave me grace to get through yesterday, and the day before, and the 14,000 and some days before that. There has never been a day that was too much. Sure, I might be a little sleepy, but maybe I'll get a nap, or Kath will come home early, or God will just help me minute by minute to keep faithfully serving Him right in the midst of my exhaustion. That's my hope. Somehow, someday, God is going to get me through today, and tomorrow, and the next 14,000 days after that. God is good.