

The Rhythm of Contemplation

By Carlette Gentle, SCN

Rhythm is known as the repeated patterns of movement or sound while contemplation is known as deep reflective thoughts that form who we are as a person. We each have a rhythm of life and how we contemplate. The rhythm of who we are flows out of us every day. As I stop to contemplate, I have come to realize that my way of contemplation is a rhythm of loving. It is a rhythm of going out and coming in. It is a rhythm of caring that sometimes feels like movements of melodious music.

So, as I stop to contemplate about the rhythm of my life, I realize that I am a *tender*. I am an antenna; my ears and heart are on high alert to pick up signals of injustices. I attend to the needs of my neighbors, the poor, the elderly, people



seeking assistance and I attend with love and compassion. I work mainly with the elderly poor living on Southside Belize City. I am attentive to their needs trying to help in whatever way possible. And as I go out and attend to my clients, I also know that I have to come in and attend to me as well. As I pause to contemplate these people, these interactions, the faces come back to me as well. It's that back-and-forth rhythm, I go out and work with them

and then come in and reflect on myself and them and hold them in loving prayer as I know they do for me. The back-and-forth rhythm of loving and being loved.



This contemplative time of slowing down and pausing is needed by my body, mind, and soul. Therefore, when my body calls out, I must create that time and



space for it to happen. I know sometimes we might not believe that we need this time, but the body has a way of calling out for its needs. Thus, some days I lay in my hammock contemplating looking to the peaceful sky for assurance that I am not in this ministry alone, that I don't have to carry the burdens of those I work with alone. And as God knows my thoughts, I believe God sends the beautiful Caribbean wind to engulf my body. I close my eyes and feel the embrace of God in the wind. This is my assurance "I am not in this alone." After a while I let go and let God take me where God wills. The beauty of contemplation, I believe, is letting oneself go as God guides our thoughts.



I enjoy cooking and being in the kitchen. As a result, one way I look at contemplation is allowing myself to sit in a combination of seasonings being marinated, with the seasonings of God, and of my experiences. Taking time for the marinade to happen will assure me that the seasonings are embedded within me. And after that marinade I then allow the time for a slow simmer in my pot

of Gods loving arms. The slow simmer over low heat allows the slow process of thoughts, and the presence and love of God to mingle and create the *tender* that I am.





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