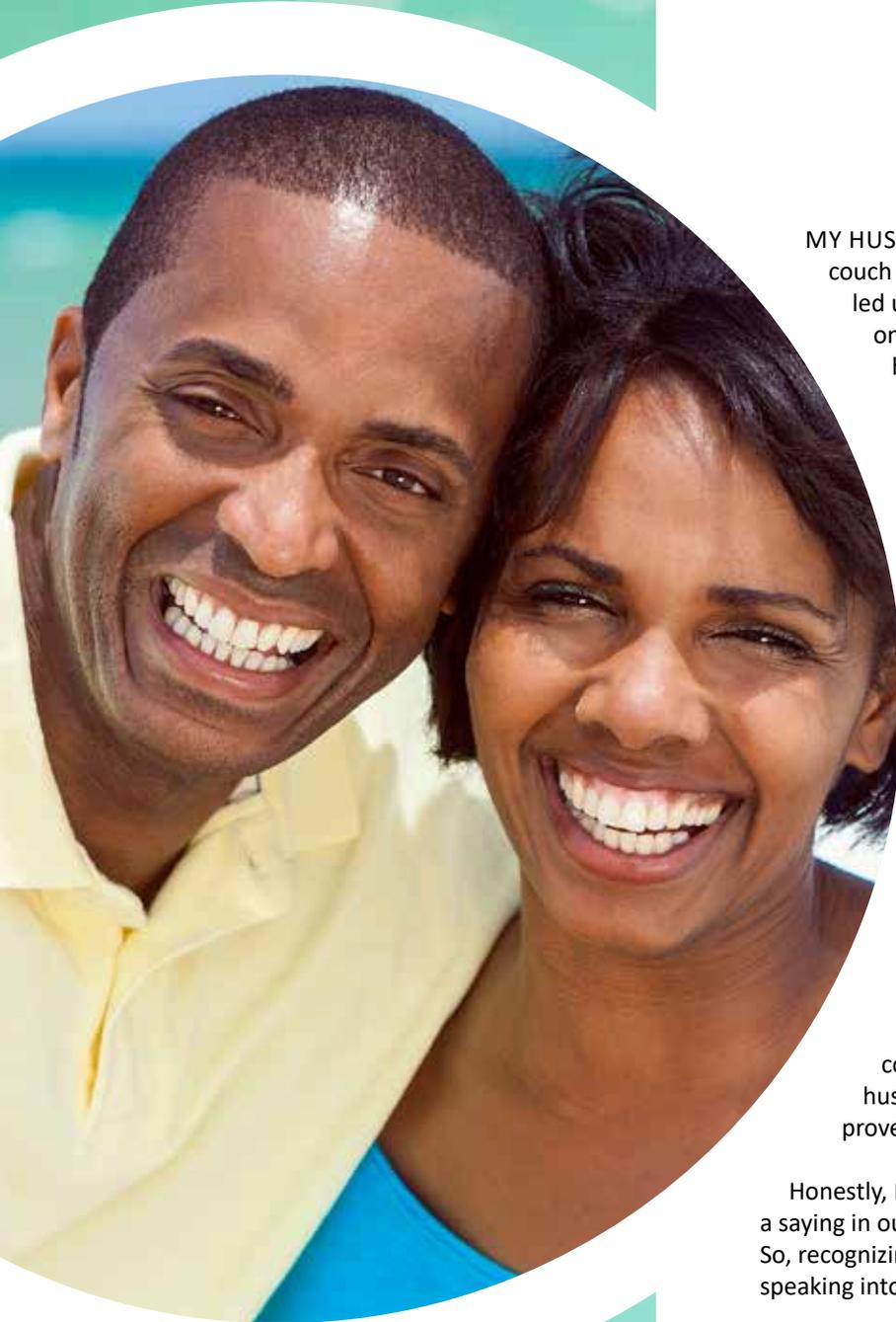


Making Time



MY HUSBAND AND I found ourselves on the counseling couch in Papua, Indonesia. It was funny what had led us there. As a pastor's wife for 21 years, I was on a quest to learn how to better listen to my husband. I knew that in ministry our husbands frequently carry heavy and confidential loads. I also recognized that sometimes when our husbands are wounded, it is we, the wives, who are left bleeding. My mission was to discover how to listen better—without bleeding out myself.

So in strength and confidence I met with some visiting psychologists and psychiatrists from the United States. I wanted to learn and glean from them. They *loved* my topic, but they also probed at my motivation. I admitted that being missionaries had been challenging. They listened empathetically and likened my husband to a "professional spear catcher." How is that for a descriptive term? Perhaps you can relate. Does it sometimes feel as if your husband is catching spears from this direction and that? After listening to me the counselors said they wanted to meet with my husband, Darron. Thus, we found ourselves on the proverbial counseling couch.

Honestly, Darron didn't feel the need. However, we have a saying in our ministry that "healthy people get help." So, recognizing that we can always benefit from people speaking into our lives, we were there, on the couch.

After seeing and listening to Darron, the psychologists were quite surprised at how well Darron looked and at his perspective on his circumstances. They were very affirming of his stamina and the gift of determination and Boyd persistence that is a legacy from his father.

They asked what we do to maintain our marriage. I declared that in six weeks we had booked a three-week Airbnb all to ourselves during our furlough in Tennessee.

Take time to connect with your spouse each week—for the glory and honor of God.

Usually we spend 90 percent of our furlough with family and friends. The counselors admired us for creating this time but expressed concern about what we were doing to create space and time alone together prior to this vacation and upon our return to mission service.

Can you relate? It is difficult sometimes to find consistent time to date and be together as a couple. These psychologists, whose goal is to keep people in the field versus sending them home, challenged us to take time (at least once a week) to do something together as a couple in order to survive the spears being hurled at my husband. They commissioned us to do it for the “glory and honor of God.” To call it work time. To recognize that it was as vital as anything else we did. Wow. How insightful is that?

So for the next six weeks, we tried to be more intentional . . . but ministry is full, and so is a house of four boys and student missionaries going home. At last our awaited three-week furlough alone arrived. Months of anticipation equaled one frustrated wife who was dealing with a husband who had just broken his rib. I know this sounds horribly selfish, but I was so frustrated. He couldn’t run (a great way for us to keep off the weight from all the fun furlough food), he wasn’t in the mood to have fun, and everything hurt. Including my spirit. I really had to bring my attitude to the Lord and allow Him to put His spirit of love in me and minister to my disappointments.

Also, it sealed the importance of what our therapists had been trying to teach us: that we can’t wait for mountaintop experiences but must do the maintenance stuff all along. I know the Lord was gently trying to teach me this lesson through a hard thing.

There you have it. It’s not a pretty story. It’s a story mixed with grazed spear wounds and the struggle to find time to date in the fullness of life. I’m not proud of the story or my disappointed, selfish spirit.

Yet, we are growing, and I hope you can learn from us. I hope you will take time with your spouse each week to connect and relax in a fun and refreshing way, *for the glory and honor of God*. Let’s face it: ministry is hard, whether it be in a multiple church district, a thriving congregation, or a mission position. Satan would like nothing better than to wear us down and make us give up. Let us do our part to protect and restore the first love that we had for our spouse and unwind together. It will help us keep all the fiery darts of the devil in perspective. 7

After 22 years as a pastoral and missionary spouse, Ruth Boyd feels she is finally emerging into the butterfly stage of her life. She loves writing and speaking, encouraging women in ministry, nursing, painting, going on adventures with her husband, and learning to “be still.” She currently serves in Papua, Indonesia, with her husband and four teenage sons.