

## Christmastime 2010

Christmas has a lot to do with time. I actually learned how to tell time one Christmas.

I was 4 years old and somehow my brother, sister and I convinced my parents to get up 5:00 AM to open presents.

But I didn't know how to tell time yet so I asked my mother how I would know when it was 5:00. She told me that when one hand of the clock was on the 5 and the other hand was on the 12, then it was 5:00 and I could come get them. So we went off to bed but, of course, I couldn't sleep. The long night was dragging on and on, so eventually I took my blanket and went into the bathroom where there was a clock on the wall. I sat in the tub with my blanket for what seemed like an eternity, staring at the clock and waiting for the hands to get in the right places. At last one hand was on the 5 and the other one was on the 12, so I burst into my parents room, turned on the lights and shouted "Merry Christmas, let's open presents." My mother pulled her groggy head up and squinted at me. She then looked over at her clock and groaned: "Kevin, its 12:25 go back to bed!" Which, I reluctantly did for another 4 hours and 35 minutes.

The joy of Christmas also has a lot to do with how we spend our time. How is your Christmas going so far? There is a condition that runs rampant this time of year which I call the Christmas Crazies, which is a kind of fatigue and testiness which comes as a result of a combination of several stress factors: 8 or more trips to retail stores shopping for presents, twice as many cash or debit card transactions as in a normal month, and 5 or more straight days of getting stuck in long lines, either in the stores or on the roads. For example, if this service is the longest you've sat still for 2 weeks, then you have a serious case! So if you've been experiencing these things the last week or two and find yourself tired and irritable, then you may be suffering the Christmas Crazies.

The Good News is that the cure is relatively simple: you need some Christmas quiet. For me, my soul starts to quiet down with the singing of Silent Night. I also feel peaceful when I drive home after the last service listening to beautiful Christmas music on the radio. I also love to go for a walk at night when the streets are quiet and the Christmas lights are glowing. And when you find yourself in that quiet moment thankful for those who fill your life and missing those who are gone, ask yourself this question: Why did God come in the form of a little baby? After all, God could've come as a General or a Rock Star, but God chose to enter the world the same way we do, as a vulnerable little child.

You answer it for yourself, but in the quiet of my soul this

Christmas two answers come to mind:

1. Because a child is a symbol of love, and God wants us to know how much we are loved.

2. And a newborn child is a symbol of need and God wants us to care for his love the way we would care for a newborn child.

God, in short, wants to love and be loved and reached out to us as far as he could, by becoming one of us so that we might become more like him.

And so, Christmas is also timeless. A yearly reminder of one thing that never changes: that God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life.

Amen