

Free Refills

There probably isn't a mother alive who doesn't love McDonald's. Not for the cuisine, mind you, but for the convenience.

Due to today's busy lifestyles, many moms frequently take advantage of this fast-food phenomenon.

At one time I was among the millions who do, and I have to admit, my kids loved it, too. It was amazing how my tots could spot those golden arches from their backseat vantage point! They would squeal with delight at the prospect of "driving through."

The real thrill came, however, when we actually pulled in, parked and went inside.

Here, I could catch a quick but pleasant lunch with a girlfriend while the kids romped happily in the play area. It was great to be able to enjoy an adult conversation with another battle-weary mom who had spit-up on her collar.

But the REAL attraction for the moms was free refills. We could sip on soft drinks for a couple of hours without running dry. For one brief interlude in our hectic day, we could fill and refill our cups as often as we liked. Who would ever have guessed that McDonald's could be such an oasis?

Though I actually am NOT a big proponent of today's fast food, I AM in favor of finding an oasis, a

secret place where one can be refreshed. With our lives moving at such an incredibly fast pace, we are left with precious little time to do the things that replenish us spiritually, emotionally and physically. The endless juggling of appointments, family obligations, meetings and schedules can completely drain us, leaving us feeling stressed out and anxious.

Recently I was made aware of a staggering statistic: More than 70 percent of all doctor visits are stress-related. And a large percentage of those who suffer from stress-related issues are women. We must be careful not to become the next victims! We must find a time and a place to get refilled.

Because I have met so many women who feel overwhelmed at the multitude of “hats” they wear, I am especially sensitive to their plight. They are wives, mothers, schoolteachers, financial advisors, chefs, and chauffeurs – all in their spare time. Most of them also work full time outside their homes.

Jesus gave a mouth-watering invitation to one woman who was so stressed out she found herself off-schedule by at least 3 hours. Though most women came to draw water from the well in the cool of the morning, this frazzled woman didn't show up until noon.

In any event, Jesus gave her an appetizing offer of refreshing cool water when He said, “If

you only knew the
gift God has for you and who I am, you would ask Me, and I
would give you living
water. People soon become thirsty again after drinking this
[natural] water. But
the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes
a perpetual
spring within them, giving them eternal life” (John 4:10,
13-14,
NLT).

Jesus was extending free refills of strength and power to any
weary
person who would ask. It is clear that He does not intend for
us to carry a
heavy load of concern and busyness. His words of invitation
still ring out to us
today as He says, “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and
carry heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

It is in finding quiet times of
escape that we can be renewed and refreshed. We must unplug
from our
electrically charged schedules to be replenished and to rest.
Even our mighty
God rested after creating the universe (see Gen. 2:2), and His
son Jesus
withdrew to quiet places just to hear the voice of His
Father.

Intentional solitude is crucial. I believe the Lord wants to
draw
us into a secret place of refuge where He can speak into our
dry and thirsty
souls. He gives us free refills whenever we take the time,

separate ourselves

and call on Him. Whenever I get alone with Him, I find my life is put in order.

Somehow the clamor and demands are silenced. In the stillness, He is there.

I encourage you to make the time to slip away. After all, "You deserve a break"—not only today, but every day!

PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF 5/17/2010

This week take time for "free refills" from the Holy Spirit by soaking in His presence through worship and quiet prayer. Enjoy His peace and rest as you cast every care upon Him. Surrender your life anew and trust Him for direction and purpose. Lift up those who are giving their lives for the gospel and pray for their protection and provision. Remember those victimized by recent tornadoes and floods. Continue to pray for worldwide revival, Israel and our nation. Matt 11:28