

Dear Prayer Partners,

This week brought many unexpected challenges and victories! Although the good, the bad, and the ugly are too numerous to recount, I will try to sum up what the Lord has been teaching me.

1. Last Monday and Tuesday found me in bed with a fever and sinus infection. Although it threw me off my routine, the Lord knew what He was doing and was graciously giving me time to rest and reflect on HIS purpose for me in PNG. That purpose? Learning to live step by step in radical surrender and faith, whether it be little daily things or burdensome life decisions. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29). I am thankful that in my uncertain future (and lingering sniffles), He is faithful and strong!

2. Although I am picking up a good amount of Pigin, it is still very hard to communicate with the nationals. God has definitely shown me certain things I take for granted in the States: being able to carry on a normal conversation, understanding everything in a church service, teaching/giving students directions easily in my own language! There are so many stumbling blocks that Satan wants to use to discourage me, but I am learning to have patience. I keep forgetting that, after all, I've only been here two weeks! :)

3. As far as getting used to a different culture, I've learned to go with the flow and follow the lead of the missionaries. For example, women sit on the left side of the church, and men sit on the right. Most sit on the floor cross-legged. Since there are no instruments to lead singing, the song leader sings the first line by himself to get everyone on the same key and remind them of the tune. :) One thing that is incredibly different from the States is everyone's friendliness toward complete strangers. Whenever we walk down the road to market, it is culturally appropriate to shake hands with everyone you see, say good morning, and even ask where they are going. With all these things to get used to, I really appreciated the insight of one of the missionaries: We might pray together in different languages, or sing the Pigin versions of old hymns, or sit in a bush hut with a man mourning the death of his wife; in all situations, our God is the same God who desires a close relationship with all who will come to Him. He understands all cultures, all languages, all hurts, and all needs. "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved" (Ps. 66:8-9).

Please pray that I will continue to heal, and that this week will be productive both in learning languages and in teaching! Please also pray that we will have clear weather Tuesday through Thursday so that the Allens will be able to finally fly in with supplies for the next few months. It's the rainy season, and we've already had a few unsuccessful attempts. Thank you!

Love in Christ,
Suzanne