

Abide With Me

By Pamela Anderson

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing"
(John 15:5, NASB).

I cherish and revel in my role as mother, but as I stare directly into the face of my husband's upcoming deployment, it gives me pause. For the next seven months I alone, humanly speaking, will be completely responsible for my daughter's emotional, physical and spiritual welfare, not to mention our finances, house, car and Finn the fish. And I don't just want to survive; I want the next seven months to be fruitful in my life and my daughter's.

Clearly, I am not the first woman to face lengthy separation from my husband for the sake of country. I am surrounded by these unsung heroes in the aisles of the commissary and the exchange, and these women are only the latest links forged in a chain of brave and uncommon sisters extending back to the infancy of our nation.

Abigail Adams, wife of our second president and a patriot in her own right, endured several separations, some lasting years, from her husband, John, as he served in the Continental Congress and later as ambassador to France. Abigail oversaw their farm and orchards, as well as all household functions, saw to the education and discipline of the Adams children, tended to their financial affairs, hired and managed servants, supplied food and drink to American soldiers, sheltered patriot families fleeing Boston, and accomplished it all during a time when goods were in short supply and the danger from the British imminent. Talk about being fruitful!

In the John 15 passage quoted above, God in Christ is pictured as the Vine and I am assigned my appropriate role as a branch. Apart from that eternal, omnipotent, life-giving Vine, I can do nothing.

Over the seven months of my husband's deployment I will need God's strength to produce the fruit I desperately want to grow in my life: unconditional love for a child whose heart yearns for her daddy; true joy when a friend's husband returns and I have many months of separation left to endure; peace when the nightly news reports danger and casualties near my husband's location; patience and kindness when my daughter asks for the 100th time in a day, "What time is it where Daddy is?"; goodness and faithfulness in heart and deed to the man I married and our shared dreams; gentleness and self-control when I feel like hurling my frustrations at the nearest available target. These are the fruit I desire, but fruitfulness comes only as I abide in Christ, the Vine, and, wonder of wonders, He abides in me.

The Greek word for abide is *men*, meaning to remain, dwell, and in this particular instance the idea of persevering. I remain with Christ, Christ remains with me. I dwell with Christ, and Christ dwells with me. I persevere in my weakness to abide in the Vine, the glorious Vine perseveres in His strength and abides in me. I live as a branch securely attached to the

Vine. Our intimate attachment is my first thought at dawn, the last whisper of my spirit each night, my shield and defender for each breath in between. Tpe

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