

*The best way to de-stress is to bless.*

Slipping up behind my daughter Hope, both arms around her shoulders, I pull the girl in close, kiss her on the top of her head. “You? Looks like you could use a hug.”

“Mummy.” She turns, thinly half smiles, tilts her head into mine, and I rest my cheek on her hair.

I don’t know how to love like I want. I don’t know how to smooth out angst or stress or worry, but I know you either leave your worries with God...or your worries will make you leave God.

Honestly, I don’t know how to be what she needs me to be, or what anyone needs me to be. I don’t know how to become cruciform. But maybe life isn’t overwhelming when we simply understand how to give, just in this moment. I don’t know – maybe all there is to living, to loving, is to live into the givenness of the moment. She looks like she just needed arms to hold her.

“You’re kind of scared about everything you’ve got ahead of you?” I say it into her hair quietly.

She nods, and I pull her closer...and I can feel Hope breathing slow, feel my stress ebb, feel it in the warmth between us. We all long for the belonging of communion and yet there is this fear of the closeness of fellowship. Love is our deepest longing – and what we most deeply fear. Love breaks us vulnerably open – and then can break us with rejection. There’s this craving for genuine communion – and yet this fear of losing genuine independence. Need can be a terrifying thing. I know – I have built my fair share of fortress walls. You can crave communion but fear being used or manipulated or smothered or burned. I have used a thousand buckets to douse any spark of a terrifying, vulnerable communion.

How can I keep forgetting? Write it up my arms: *koinonia is always, always the miracle.*

“We’re here, and we’re for you.” I whisper it, press the words into a gentle kiss on her forehead, and maybe there’s a bit of *koinonia* in the stress.