



Turnip Greens
~Harvesting

Pecans

Watermelon

Okra

Persimmons

Collards

Tomatoes

Squash

In the Daily with Diane

November 2011

Happy Thanksgiving! This is something that we, as Christians, are to be about every day of the year. I love Thanksgiving for several reasons; a time for remembering (something else we, as Christians, are called to do regularly), a time of celebration, a gathering together with family and friends, and if you are Southern – an exceptional Saturday of college football too! I do hope you were able to celebrate this Thanksgiving with those you love and that you were able to take time to remember all that God has blessed you with this past year. I am thankful for YOU being a part of my life. This year has been one filled with blessings and life lessons, as well as being able to see God at work both in and around and even at times through me. It's been a very good year.

One of the life lessons that has been coming back to me again and again this year is about stewardship. In my last letter I mentioned that living in Cambodia had helped prepare me for living in rural Ga. Actually, I can remember writing in newsletters from Cambodia, if I had paid more attention to life at my grandparents (the next house down from where I live now), I would have been better prepared. Life in a small town, be it in the countryside of Ga or Cambodia, is all about relationships. It's not just who you know (though that can be helpful); it's also what you know about them – as in how well/deeply you know someone. And I believe this to be biblical.

So what does this have to do with stewardship? According to Merriam-Webster: **stew-ard-ship** noun \ 'stü-ərd-ship, 'styü-; 'st(y)urd-\ is the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; *especially*: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. Now if we apply this alongside Psalm 24: 1 “The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it...”, it works out something like – Everything I have, has come from the Lord and He has entrusted me with it for the careful and responsible management of it. Stewardship implies something about the relationship between the One entrusting and the one entrusted. Every year that I live, I keep learning in new ways that we need one another, not just our family, but all those we know and have been entrusted with and to. And God has made me and you just the way we are for a reason. We have certain gifts, talents, and abilities for a reason as well. I'm not supposed to be just like you but I am supposed to be the best “me” that God intended. Ironically, God has gifted me with a LOT of energy and a love for getting things done – effectively and efficiently! but this isn't always the best for relationship. Jesus never seemed to be in a rush. He always had time for others. He did stay on task. He used his gifts/abilities to bless others (understatement!). He was all about love. And we are called to be Jesus-like.

So what does that look like for me? Did you notice the pictures at the top – yes MORE things that are grown locally. Half of what is pictured, we grew here and gave away our surplus. The other half is what others grew and knew we didn't have and so they gave to us from their surplus. We just dug up a new area of our yard, so that we can have a bigger garden next year – but right now we have those turnip greens growing in big buckets; broccoli and collards growing in the flowerbed since the flowers are gone until spring, and we've already planted strawberry plants in the new garden (given to us from a friend who easily cut them from hers). With my losing weight, I had to get new clothes that fit...I took in clothes too big to our local thrift stores and came out with clothes that fit for about 95% less than I'd have paid for new. That's better than any Black Friday sale. But the only way for this to “work” is if I know others well enough to know what they need and they know of my need as well. This is life in community. This is life at its best. This is one of the things I am thankful for – being able to be just who God created me to be both here and globally with InnerCHANGE, using what has been entrusted to me for the good of others and the glory of God.

At the beginning of November, I made a short 6-day trip to London for IC leadership meetings. Budgeting for the coming year and goal/priority setting filled our days, along with worship and prayer. Our first priority of attention for 2012, is to have all our staff at 90%+ of their budgets. Most of our staff are under budget due to the poor economics of the past few years. This surely helps us to identify with those we live among and serve. It can also be a huge distraction from what is most needed. Another priority goal is to increase the number of missionaries within InnerCHANGE to 200 – that would be an increase of about 20 new staff. Another focus is developing formation material for our seasoned staff.

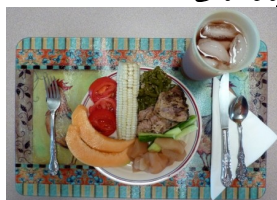
Starting in December, I will be teaching the high-school Sunday School class at my church. I'm looking forward to this new adventure and how we can be involved within our community more. Rainbow Pantry, where I volunteer each week, has had the largest number of people coming for food since it opened 30 years ago.

My home church in California is sending a team to Kenya in January. My church here in Ga has raised money to help buy supplies and materials to be used on this trip. How exciting for me to see two groups I love dearly working together to further God's kingdom.

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. My prayer for you, this Christmas season, is that you will be filled with hope, joy and love as you live in the reality of the promises of our living Lord and Savior. May you experience the freedom of being all God created you to be~ Merry Christmas to you and yours!!!

~Ways to Pray~

- 1) For those who are currently giving financially to InnerCHANGE staff to truly feel connected to the work that God is doing through them and their gifts.
- 2) For my dear friend, Dianne Bradfield, as she begins her fight against ovarian cancer. For the healthy birth of her 2nd grandchild in December too.
- 3) For creativity and connection with my new Sunday School Class.
- 4) For continuing growth in my relationship with my neighbors and being a model of faith, hope and love.



*With Delight in the Daily,
Diane*

A bonus from sharing our gardens: great healthy meals, less shopping.



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