

Greetings! My dear friend, Ma Aminah:

Many times since I left for Manasseh I have thought of you. You are a cherished friend to me. I appreciate your poured out life so very much. You are such a wonderful treasure in the body. I always will appreciate your keen eye. So many times you had such insight about things that went by me unnoticed. Our Father needs you greatly.

I wanted to write you about a certain matter that happened before I left Island Pond that significantly concerned me. Perhaps the Cook's Meeting might be a good place to discuss this if it seems appropriate.

Before I left Island Pond quite a large move was in the making under the council of the elders. About a week (or less) before I left I was with one of the women who goes to the Cook's Meeting. She asked me what I thought about certain moves and in the course of our conversation she told me about a conversation she had with another woman who also goes to the Cook's Meeting. In short, what concerned me was this: the woman she had the conversation with made this comment about the moves, "Oh, that can't happen, our household doesn't have peace about it." She was speaking about certain moves that involved her household. I had a strong reaction to this. I said, "What does she mean? We are under the government of the elders." I also said many other things. I must have gone on about it for half an hour. What really concerned me was if this is the way an older woman in the body understands things then who else has this kind of understanding. I have no doubt of the wonderful character of this woman, nor of her submissive heart, but I felt perhaps this is a reflection of somewhat of a tilt - a slight bend off the narrow way that may also be in others. Perhaps it has been in me and hearing those words jolted me.

The households do not rule the elders, the elders rule the households. It is not up to the households to have the final say. It is up to the elders (of whom we witnessed the laying on of hands and said "yes" before our God that these men would rule over us through the power of the Holy Spirit).

It seems to me, if we do not have peace then we must seek our God until we do have peace, and then if peace can not be found we should approach whoever it is we need to talk to with fear and trembling about the matter, lest we find ourselves coming against the very council of Yahweh.

As women, we must be very careful that we do not allow logic to overtake us and reason against the very thing our God wants for us. I believe I fell into this myself (looking back) at the Dwelling. It was a time when we had several younger women there and no older women at home to disciple them. We began to plead our case. But the elders, in great wisdom, did not want to make any hasty moves that would cause a domino effect, as there were many needy places in Island Pond at that time. Finally, one of the women fell away. In my reasoning I was convinced this was proof something needed to happen immediately. When I didn't I went into despair. As I look back now, I can see that it is very likely that our Father allowed these very circumstances to rid us of the insincere.

That we would not have the drain of pouring our lives into one whose love belonged to another. We must be daughters of Sarah and not judge merely by the circumstances. This is of the flesh. We must become her daughters and ... "do what is right without giving way to any fears" I Peter 3:6. And what is right is to entrust ourselves to the One who judges justly. This is the very reason submission is not bondage to us for our loyalty goes far beyond flesh and blood, it is to the One who knows if one sparrow falls to the ground or if one hair falls from our head. We have every reason to trust, for He, Himself, trusted and became our example, our emancipator, our deliverer!

I am not in any way writing these things to quench anyone from expressing their hearts to the elders. It is quite clear to our apostle and to the elders that they need the women to help complete their wisdom. But I am addressing what may be a snare of the enemy trying to take us off the narrow way. I have heard it said, "It seems like it takes the elders a long time to make a decision. Perhaps we are unwittingly thwarting the decisions of the elders by our many feelings or opinions. I wonder if we are really taking time to seek our Father before we speak our "hearts" about things we have a problem with. If we don't do this we might be merely speaking our own minds and not the mind of the spirit, thus keeping our Father's hand from moving.

I remember a time when the elders came home from a meeting and said, "You're moving" and the next day you moved - scarcely a question asked. I'm sure you remember those times too (Gatlinburg). As time has gone on, we have learned a lot about grace and government working together and have greatly increased from it. But I hope we never lose sight that there is no grace apart from government or authority, lest we fall away and become like the harlot who votes on decisions and secretly "blackball" what is not right in our own eyes. I do not believe this is our fate, however. Our God is with us. And as I said earlier, the woman who made the statement that became the catalyst of my reaction would HATE any divisive spirit that would cause her to work against Yahweh's government. We must pray as our Master taught us, that He would deliver us from evil so that the snares of the evil one might be revealed to us.

Read Acts 20:28; I Timothy 5:17 and Hebrews 13:17 (amplified) concerning the elders ruling over us.

I love you, Ma'Aminah, and I pray often for Island Pond. We are such a blessed people. We belong to Him.

Last and certainly least, here are a few "Helpful Hannah Hints" I picked up from being out here.

1). Here is a Sabbath Pie or special breakfast idea I came upon from sheer desperation. A biscuit bar. I made salty biscuits and raisin biscuits and provided several different toppings: cream cheese spread, scrambled eggs, one biscuit sized slice of cheddar cheese per person, apple sauce, and I'm sure you can think of your own toppings. Tofu would be nice.