

“Mommy Sit!”  
by Emily White Hodge

For a variety of reasons, my husband & I began to re-evaluate how we use our resources – time, money, transportation etc. In an effort to simplify, we made some choices. Since then, I’ve stopped running errands on a daily basis, have started riding my bike to work regularly, and have cut back on the number of trips in the car. As a result, I’m spending almost every afternoon at home.

When I first considered the sacrifice of not driving the car each afternoon, I thought I’d be really bored. And more importantly, I thought my two year old daughter would be bored. I’ve worked diligently over the course of her short little life to provide lots of fun activities that will stretch her mind, introduce her to fun people, and have all kinds of adventures. So, when I made the decision to cut back & spend each afternoon at home, I thought FOR SURE I would hear about it.

Much to my surprise, I’ve found quite the opposite. My daughter loves being at home. In fact, if she’s had enough action out on the town, she asks for “HOME!” Though we enjoy walks around the block to see Roxy, the dog, and walks to the local grocery store, we spend almost each afternoon at the house.

When we’re at the house, I often find myself full of energy. So I do what any energetic Mom would do – wash the dishes, fold the laundry, return phone calls, balance the checkbook, check emails, clean out closets etc. I can get a lot done in a day. However, my daughter is teaching me a new skill. She is teaching me the fine art of playing.

“Mommy sit!” has become her mantra, as she loudly pats the floor beside her. Sometimes it comes in the form of a question, but usually it is phrased as a demand. “Mommy sit!” She begs me to sit on the floor and play. We have discovered the pleasures of choo-choo trains, little people, balls, dolls & cars.

“Mommy sit!” was one of my daughter’s first sentences. When she said it the first few times, I didn’t think much of it. I just thought, “That’s cute. She wants me to play with her.” But the more she said it (and she says it many times every day), the more I began to reflect on the significance of “Mommy sit!” I’ve found that she’s not so interested in the sitting, as she is in the time spent without distraction.

As a type A, German, energetic career woman with lots of things I’d like to do in any given day, let’s just say that “Mommy sit!” isn’t exactly my forte in life. If it isn’t on a list that I can check off (to demonstrate just how much I’ve done in a day) it probably doesn’t come natural to me. I’m motivated by action and accomplishment, by progress & growth.

But her insistence intrigued me. I began to see “Mommy sit” as a spiritual journey. For my daughter, “Mommy sit!” is the gift of my uninterrupted attention. “Mommy sit”

means I'm not doing laundry or dishes. I'm not checking email. I'm not on the phone with another friend. I'm simply on the floor – eyeball to eyeball. Connected.

When I'm doing "Mommy sit!" I'm living in the moment with her. We're wrapped up in nothing and everything all at the same time. As I've begun to sit down more & "do" less, I've noticed a shift. I've noticed that I've become more engaged, more relaxed & more tuned into my daughter. I've also noticed a shift in her. She's become more patient, less demanding and more fun to be around.

But I've noticed that I've also tuned into my own life. I've found that I'm able to recognize my own emotions in any given moment. Instead of being focused on the past (frustrations of the day) or the future (what remains undone), I'm able to slip into the "NOW."

It is also the realization that God is waiting for me. He's waiting for me to say, "Daddy sit!" He's got time. But do I? God is sitting on the park bench of my soul – waiting for me to sit down with him – to be still long enough to make a connection.

When I take time to sit & think, or to steal a few moments to read, or even just take a nap & rest, I find that God speaks to me. When I'm racing around, trying to find a "deal" at a local store, or finish one last project, I find that my mind is completely occupied. It's occupied with a sort of drive. But when I'm able to slow my mind a bit, I find that space opens up for God to "sit" with me in my soul.

So each day when my daughter says, "Mommy sit," I am reminded of just how willing God is to sit with me & look me in the soul, and spend uninterrupted time together. My prayer for myself is that I will learn to sit – with my daughter, with God, and in my own soul.