

The Eagles Renewal

For our monthly circle meetings, one of our members usually spends a good deal of effort to put together a short program for the circle that would inspire, and it often does. When a job needs to be done at church, it is often WELCA that is willing to do the work. And our circles have always sought to find ways to reach out to others outside the church. But it is the relationships of the women within our church and within my circle that have inspired me the most. This can be illustrated by the story of molting eagles.

One of the most interesting characteristics about eagles is the molting process they go through. At about midlife, eagles experience an unusual chemical change in their bodies, and the time of molting begins. The eagle will seek out a secluded valley and sit there hour after hour with her head down. Her eyes are dry: her tear ducts are stopped. And one by one she starts to lose her feathers.

She no longer hunts for food. Her talons become brittle from digging in the dirt for insects. She loses weight; death seems to be knocking at her door. Hope is dead. Her strength is gone. She has neither the inclination nor the energy to soar again.

In this dejected state the eagle is very alone and isolated. It is a self-inflicted isolation, because she has left the comfort and safety of her nest, her community of eagles, and her mate. She is in a valley, not seated in her lofty nest. Her wings are drooping and sad, no longer catching the winds and soaring above the clouds. She doesn't look or feel or act like an eagle.

Suddenly she hears familiar sounds above her. Slowly she raises her head as the sounds get louder. It is the sound of her fellow eagles flying above her in circle formation.

She must wonder at first if they are mocking her, but then she realizes they are there to help. They keep flying above her dropping tidbits of food into the valley for their molting, discouraged, ready to quit co-eagle. This continues as long as is necessary, and gradually, as the dejected eagle eats the food, her strength is renewed. She is able to soar again.

So it is with the Women of the ELCA. This story of the eagles illustrates perfectly what we do. When one of our own needs help we rally, and are there for each other just as the eagles are.

Romans 12:4-5

⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Ephesians 4:16

¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Prayer

Dear God,

We know we are all connected regardless of our background, culture, race, gender, age, denomination or social status. Help us remember that through faith in Jesus Christ, we become a part of the Body of Christ, and our responsibility is to build each other up. Help us to be circling above, dropping nourishment and encouragement to any fallen, discouraged, despairing women.

In Jesus name, Amen