

How airplanes & flights remind me of the Christian life (related prayer requests highlighted)

If you've ever been on a plane, you know there are several stages from the beginning to the end of your flight. You must have the proper identification, complete regulations for security of yourself and your items, be at your gate on time, follow procedures, and then WAIT. Wait for the plane to finish taxiing around on the runway, wait for the safety instructions to be over so you can read/sleep/watch a movie, wait for the flight to be over, and then wait your turn to get off the plane and wait for your luggage to appear on the conveyor belt. In the Christian life, we have times of WAITING. Waiting for the right time to have a conversation. Waiting for the job interview. Waiting for the news from the doctor. Waiting on the Lord for strength or patience or for Him to work in a situation. Waiting for God to one day restore all things. If waiting is something that comes as a challenge (for me, it definitely can be at times), I recommend a short book called *Waiting Isn't a Waste: The Surprising Comfort of Trusting God in the Uncertainties of Life* by Mark Vroegop. I need to remind myself that God can use even the periods of waiting for His glory and my good (Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 40:31, Romans 8:28). As I look ahead to this "school year", one of the things I will be waiting for is my visa renewal paperwork. I can't apply until my card expires in November, but then I must wait for the paperwork to be processed and the renewal to be granted, for a fingerprint appointment, and so on. Pray that the whole process would be timely and favorable, as it usually takes about 6 months from start to finish.

When flying, you also must LISTEN carefully and OBEY. Listen to all instructions for safety and security, listen and watch to see if there are any changes or delays, and listen to the announcements on the flight. Obey the instructions for what is and is not allowed on the plane. Obey the captain's instructions during the flight. As Christians, we must LISTEN and OBEY our Captain and Lord, Jesus Christ. We must follow the instructions in His Word. We must live lives that allow us to listen carefully to Scripture and then do what it says. We want to be people who hear and OBEY (Joshua 1:8-9, Matthew 7:24-27, James 1:22-25). As I take Spanish classes (starting this week!), pray for me to be able to listen and learn well. As I continue with my discipleship group at ECA and other ministries this year, pray that I would listen and obey the Lord, keeping my relationship with Him a priority so that I can sense His leading and prompting. Pray also that I continue to listen and obey the prompting of the Holy Spirit as He brings opportunities to share the Gospel with Spaniards at Brilla Cafe or my language school classmates.

Then there is TRUST. You must trust the captain to fly the plane. You must trust the entire plane to work properly. You must trust that the plane will take off and land safely and fly without issue. You can't do anything about the plane getting from point A to point B successfully, so you must trust. Similarly, as we place our lives in surrender to Christ, we must TRUST Him completely. Trust that He has saved us, completely, through His death, burial, and resurrection. Trust in His promises that He will be with us always and will not stop loving, caring, and providing for His own. Trust in Him to do

the work of transforming and renewing us to be more like Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-5, John 17:17, Philippians 1:6, Hebrews 10:23). When seeds of doubt or uncertainty come my way, may I TRUST in the Lord. When I think too much about the unknown or the "what-ifs", may I TRUST in His promises. When I falter and fail, may I remember that He knows me, He holds me, and He remains FAITHFUL. Finally, when you are on your flight, you have OPPORTUNITIES. You can chat with those around you and make new friends. You could catch up on work, read a book, or try to get some shut-eye. These opportunities may be interrupted by a crying baby, a flight attendant with snack and drink options, or some turbulence. But there are opportunities. As Christ followers, may we all be looking for opportunities to share the reason for the hope that we have in Christ. May we be taking advantage of the time, the locations, and the positions we have to be salt and light to our neighbors, co-workers, families, and communities. May we even take advantage of some free time we have to spend it intentionally with Jesus (1 Peter 3:15, Luke 10:38-42). Because I won't have the time commitment of an elementary school teacher this year, I pray that the Lord would show me how best to use my time. That I would take advantage of opportunities to practice my Spanish, to connect with people in the community, and to spend more time in prayer and in His Word.

August was such a blessing as I was able to spend time with many family members (parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, cousins, and my nephew!) and many friends from Ohio. I enjoyed hearing updates, seeing how friends' kids have grown, and being blessed by so many conversations, prayers, and hugs! I'm thankful to the Lord for these sweet times and for how He uses believers to strengthen and encourage us.

Thank you for your prayers and continued support!

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