

Released

In my Bible readings this week I was reintroduced to a group of people I had always skipped over in the past. The story is a familiar one – that of Gideon being instructed to whittle down his army until only 300 men remained. The reflection I read commented on the faith the remaining soldiers would have needed – sure, got that, and the faith needed by those who had been sent away – wait, what? Though I had never thought about them before, I guess I would have assumed that they'd be relieved to be released from duty for this battle. Return home to your family – great, zero chance of death on the battle field – even better. What I hadn't considered was that these men were soldiers; they were trained and prepared to fight. I suppose it would be like a star athlete being released from the starting line of a big game. Sure, you are safe from being injured in the game, but you also have to sit on the sidelines while someone else plays "your" game, fights "your" battle, and wins "your" glory.

What really caught my attention about this group was being in a similar position to these men. I am now entering my last month in Niger. Though life here is often not easy, and there are things at the health centres that drive me crazy, if it were my choice, I'd probably stay. The bottom line, though, is that it's not my choice. I firmly believe I was called to the mission field and that God lead me to be here. I also know in my heart that He is leading me on to serving Him in other ways. Like the soldiers, though, I prepared and trained for life here and now I am among those in my community who have the most experience. Does it make sense for it to be us who are released? Maybe it does if God is preparing to do something amazing. While I'm looking forward to returning to the comforts and securities of home, it isn't easy to leave the battle to another. Might I remember that this battle was never mine in the first place, and joyfully accept the something else for which God is releasing me.