

## Sit, enjoy yourself

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As YAGM, under the auspices of the ELCA, we practice a mission model referred to as the model of accompaniment. Accompaniment means “*walking together in solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality*”. Okay, but those are challenging words. At its heart, accompaniment is about reconciliation. We are a people *called to be* in *relationship* and created for *community*. How is this call articulated in this broken world, where the pronouns “us” and “them” have become normative? There is division, there is injustice, and there is exclusion and objectification of “the other”. In such a world, accompaniment is “a tool to see otherness as God intended: a gift”. It means not just speaking, but *listening*.

The holistic definition here, as I have come to understand it, is that accompaniment means *being present* in one's community, forming relationship, and just living in that intersection of my story, their story, and God's story.

In three words, it's about "*being, not doing*".

Now, there's more to say on this topic, and perhaps one day I can elucidate my thoughts further; however, accompaniment is just the framing for the subject matter of this post. So today, I leave you readers with that introduction, and move on.

## គុយលេង

"*Koy leng*" is a phrase I have heard every day since I moved to Kampot, Cambodia. "Koy leng" is a phrase that encompasses so much of *Cambodian culture* as I've experienced it. "Koy leng" is a phrase that has a deep, embedded significance.

"Koy leng" literally translated means "sit play". (Koy is short for the word angkoy, which means "to sit".)

"Koy leng," when spoken to you, can be understood as "*sit, enjoy yourself*".

On first observation, one can see that for Cambodians, sitting is a significant component of culture. Life is much-slower paced. There is a *calmness* intrinsic to life, where family members will just sit together, chatting or respecting silence. There is a *familiarity*, where a neighbor can walk up to the corner shop, and after making their purchase, pull up a red plastic chair and visit. There is a *hospitality*, where a visitor is welcomed, and immediately offered a chair upon which to rest. Family sits together. Friends sit together. Strangers sit together.

That is what "koy leng" means. This sitting should *never* be interpreted as laziness, as passivity, or as a meaningless action. To "sit, enjoy yourself" is *intentional*. When with someone, it's about intentional togetherness. When alone, it's about intentional relaxation and enjoyment of the moment.

A U.S. American equivalent for this action is visible in coffee dates with friends or a walk to the park and a rest among the shade. "Sit, enjoy yourself" is a beautiful form of *walking in accompaniment*, of being not doing, which, in its essence, it truly is. It's a moment of silence. It's a moment of conversation. It's *companionship*.

I can sit at the kitchen table and enjoy life with my host sister, as we smile over cute puppies, talk cultural differences, or eat snacks. I can sit in the shop with my host mother, watching our constant stream of visitors (customers), and sharing the moments. I can sit in the yard of a stranger, observing life in the village.

As I sit and enjoy myself, I cannot help but reflect on accompaniment, on building community, and creating relationship. "Sit, enjoy yourself" is more than just a simple phrase. It's a *way of life*.

Love to you all. Take a moment to "koy leng" with your friend or your neighbor, share life together, and smile.

Peace,  
KMJ

