

Tuesday 9-5-06 – This is me making my valiant effort to turn over a new leaf. I am a negligent daily journalist. A daily journal is one of those things that if you let one or two days pass without journaling it isn't too hard to pick back up where you left off. If you let one week pass then things get a bit more hectic. And even worse if you are like me and let an entire month pass you by without so much as a "it is grocery day again" you know that you are in big trouble. And here I am one month and four days later admitting to the world (at least to those that read my journal – may God bless you for your interest) that I am in big trouble. And in an effort to remedy this situation in which I have recently found myself I will start with all the exciting details of today – the fifth day of the ninth month of the year two thousand and six.

This morning Kaela was up and calling out "Mommy! Mommy!" at the top of her lungs long before I was ready to crawl out of bed. In the last month we moved her out of her crib and into a "big girl bed" and she just loves her new bed! She is doing great sleeping in it and it came as a surprise to me that when she wakes up each morning and instead of taking advantage of her newfound freedom and hopping out of bed – she lays there and calls for me until I come get her up. I'm not complaining, though! It won't be long until her little fingers are reaching over the side of our bed and trying to pry open my eye-lids for me.

I spent the morning in my usual chores: sweeping, washing breakfast dishes, making beds, showering, picking up the house and then I added to that list, doing laundry. Shawnda and Eric's good friends from Oklahoma flew in this morning for a week-long visit to Vanuatu. I know they will enjoy having Ben and Tara here for a visit, even though it is a short one. When the Brandell's left for the airport this morning I told Kaela that they were going to pick up Ben and Tara. Keep in mind that the only time Kaela has ever met them was when she was nine months old, although she has seen a lot of pictures of them. Anyway, after I told Kaela that – she goes, "Ben and Tara! I love Ben and Tara!" It was too funny coming from her!

Before lunch we all went to the grocery store to buy bread – which I just remembered has been sitting out in the back seat of our truck for the last 3 hours and has probably reached prime mold growing conditions by now! Then during Kaela's nap I walked down to the market to buy some white bone cabbage, mandarins and some roasted peanuts. It is a beautiful day and I really enjoyed my walk!

Wednesday 9-6-06 – Today was fairly uneventful other than the usual housework and Kaela-looking-after. Aaron and I left at 4:15pm for Etas. When we arrived we found out that one of Sam's family members (distant family members) on Tanna island had died. So, pretty much everyone who participates in our Bible study was taking two days of rest to show respect to the family. So, we just stayed and visited with everyone we knew and then came back home early.

2 weeks ago I started having a Bible study with Timothy's wife (he is one of the Christians). Her name is Marina. We will hopefully be able to pick it back up next week. I love Marina – she is such a nice person and it has been fun getting to know her. We are still pretty early on in the Bible studies so it is hard to tell how receptive she is going to be. She has a strong background in the Assemblies of God with a little Pentecostal "stuff" thrown in.

Thursday 9-7-06 – Aaron went back to the church land to work on the building project again. Kaela spent about an hour this morning hanging out with Shawnda and Tara so I really moved around the house trying to get my morning chores done, including laundry.

About 10:30 Kaela and I walked to town. She has developed a small cough so we went to the drug store to get her some cough syrup. Then, we went on to the market so I could buy a basket that I have had my eye on, a tomato and some lettuce. On the way home we stopped by the playground at Independence Park so Kaela could play. She was so excited!!!! She was just giggling and laughing while I was taking her out of her stroller. I let her play for a little while and then we walked the rest of the way home for lunch. After lunch she and I seasoned the hamburgers for dinner tonight and mixed up some cookies for Aaron. She loves to help cook and especially wear her little yellow apron!

Saturday 9-9-06 – Today was a very nice day. I got up early and got ready to go because we were to have Women's fellowship at Etas. I had forgotten to remind Leimawa that we were coming on Wednesday so she was surprised to see me because she forgot that today was the day that we would be there. Nonetheless, the women were glad to see us and we had a great time of fellowship. Tara, Shawnda's friend from the Oklahoma, gave our devotional thought. Towards the end of our time there Sam, Leimawa's husband, asked me if I would take them in the truck down the river to get water. So, we loaded up all their plastic containers and headed to the river. It was SOOOO hot standing there in the sun while they filled their water containers. I decided then and there that I was going swimming before going back home. So, when we got back in Vila and we dropped Fiona off and her house, I borrowed a towel from her and went swimming in the lagoon across from where she lives. I didn't care that I didn't have good swimming clothes on. It felt great!!!! When I got home Kaela had just gone down for her nap so that left me some time to read and take a nap myself. I think the swimming and the sun wiped me out! After Kaela got up we went outside and I weeded the sandbox in our front yard. She doesn't use it too often – probably because it was over-taken by weeds! It was nice to get that job done! Aaron and I had a relaxing evening and the three of us watched the Three Amigos before it was time for her to go to bed.

Sunday 9-10-06 – Aaron, Kaela and I were back out to Etas for worship this morning. We had a good turnout. I love being there so much! Patrick and Leikavei went with us and Patrick gave his first sermon. He did a great job and we were proud of him and his willingness and readiness to preach even though he is a fairly new Christian. We headed home early because Kaela was sick and very much ready for a nap. Actually, all three of us are ailing with chest colds. Kaela is on antibiotics but Aaron and I are just trying to wait it out and battle through it! Needless to say we are all needing rest and hoping to get better before my parents arrive on Tuesday.

Monday 9-11-06 – Today was a good day. I am so thankful because Fiona came over this morning to help me clean and to watch Kaela. I also had grocery shopping to do so I really appreciated the extra help. Kaela's business and need for attention makes it difficult for me to get good cleaning done in a decent amount of time. So, I did my basic

morning chores, cleaned the toilet (fun.) and the bathroom (thanks to Aaron for cleaning the shower!). Then, when Fiona came we set to work. She thoroughly swept every room and I followed along behind her with the mop. We both worked on keeping Kaela out of the dirt pile! We finally finished with that about 11am and then I showered Kaela and I. About the time I got out of the shower, Winnie and two other women from Epau came by. They had tried to go to the hospital but were told to wait until 1:30pm. So, they hung out at our house while waiting. That meant I needed to find something to feed them. The cupboard was bare so we ended up having popcorn, tomatoes and bananas. Not a very elaborate lunch but they were appreciative of it and didn't seem to mind. After they left at 1pm, Fiona stayed with Kaela while I did my grocery shopping. I had several places to go so by the time I got home, Aaron was back home again (from running an errand) and Fiona had gone home and Kaela was sleeping. I had about 45 minutes of down time then Kaela was ready to get up and it was time to get busy on dinner. I guess this isn't much of a day of rest! That's okay – it happens and there is always lots to do to get ready for guests! I am so excited for my Mom and Dad to come although it doesn't feel quite real yet! They are staying for a month. Should be fun!

Tuesday 9-12-06 – Aaron, Kaela and I got up early this morning and got ready to go to the airport. We've been talking to Kaela about her Grandma and Grandpa coming for a while now and she gets so excited about them coming! I know she doesn't remember who Grandma and Grandpa are, but she knows they are special and that they love her from all the pictures we show her and her "Who Loves Kaela" book. She gets all smiley and giggly whenever we talk about them!

Their plane was right on time and Mom and Dad got here just fine. They only had one minor mishap with one of their pieces of luggage. An OLD suitcase they were using just fell apart on its way through Fiji. The security people called them back to come tape it up and everything was still there and nothing was damaged so we were all relieved about that! It sure is great to see them! Kaela did really good too. I was a little worried about her being uncertain of them since they were new faces but, she let them both hold her at the airport and hug and kiss her. It didn't take long for her to warm up! Especially once they brought out the little stroller for her to push her baby dolls around in! They won her over with that gift!

Friday 9-15-06 – Well, Aaron and I caught Kaela's flu and chest cough. Aaron is much worse off than I am. We both have been pretty drained and sick for the last few days. That isn't really how I imagined our first week with my parents – laying around and not feeling all that great. But, the good part is that with Grandma and Grandpa here Kaela has nearly 24hour entertainment and that gives Aaron and I time to rest! It's a good deal for us all – Mom and Dad get to catch up for lost time and Aaron and I get some much-needed rest! We haven't done too much more these last few days other than the "essential" work around the house and Aaron's had to check up on the building project a few times. We've played games (one of our favorite family activities), talked and ate together! So far it has been great!