



Bible Study DAY #4

Ready to Give My Time

By Pat Millea

Key Concept

Time is one of the many gifts that God has given to us out of love. We are called to respond to this free gift with good and holy use of our time for the building of God's Kingdom.

Introduction

It's hard to go a week without hearing a comment such as "There just aren't enough hours in the day," or "I never seem to have enough time." In our fast-paced, demanding world, it's nearly impossible to find enough time to finish our to-do list, spend time with our family, and get enough sleep, much less spend important time in prayer (see Mark 6:30-31). What does our Christian faith have to say about how we spend our time?

God, the giver of all good things, gives us a limited amount of time in a day. How we use time reveals much about our relationship to God, the depth of our love and our thankfulness for a gracious gift given.

Although it can be hard for us to understand, there are many gifts that are given inequitably among people: intelligence, athletic ability, freedom, education, etc. But time is the one commodity that is always equally given to every human being. Both the nature and the amount of time we are given remain equal to all persons. No sin we commit can take hours from our day. Nor can the most sincere prayer ever give us a 25th hour to the day.

Although we share the same amount of time, how we're called to use that time differs according to our individual call through baptism. God asks each of us to use our time in a different way, based on our unique talents.

The thing to remember when considering our own Christian use of God-given time is that ALL things can be done for God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31). While our intentional worship of God is the central expression of our faith, the way we play, study, work or do anything else speaks of our faith in action. That means even though only one day a week is set aside to focus on our relationship with God (the Sabbath), every moment of every day can be dedicated to God's glory.

At camp, it's easy to offer all of our time to God – just about every moment of the day at Camp Shalom is focused on God and our love for God. Whether we're at worship, in Bible study, on the ropes course or playing Bonkers, everything is done with love of God and our neighbor in mind. Giving all of our time to God can be much harder when we leave camp. Apart from camp there are so many more distractions in everyday life attempting to pull our attention away from God. This is true of both staff and campers. But offering our time as a gift to God is a matter of discipline and habit (see 2 Thess. 3:11). The more we include God in every moment of our day, the more comfortable we'll be giving all of our time to God, no matter what the situation!



Bible Text

[I picked the New American Bible translation; not just because I'm Catholic, but I actually like the wording of the Key Verse best in that version. Feel free to use a different one if you want! 😊]

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 (Key Verse Eccl. 3:10-11)

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build.
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.
A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces.
A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak.
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
What advantage has the worker from his toil?
I have considered the task which God has appointed for men to be busied about.
He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts, without men's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done.

Biblical Interpretation

When we speak of time, we have to understand a few different aspects about the way Biblical persons understood time in their lives and writing. First of all, the way a day began and ended was different for people in Christ's lifetime. Each day began and ended at dusk, not at midnight as we're accustomed to. Therefore, the day was measured by the sun, not by a clock (which they didn't have anyway). That means their sense of time was much more cosmic than ours. They tended to view time as great and powerful, connected to something as life-giving as the sun.

The second consideration is how important "timing" was to people in Jesus' time. Many great leaders were often concerned not only with whether or not they should invade a nation, or build a new temple, etc., but also with finding the right moment to do so. Many of these leaders would consult priests, seers, and prophets to gauge the timing of important decisions. Although we rarely consult priests or pastors with questions of timing today, we haven't lost the sense of finding the "right moment" to do something important.

Thirdly, and most theological, time is one of the most important factors separating the temporal from the eternal world. Time is a part of the human condition; something that we know here on earth (Ps. 39:5). There is no time in heaven. God himself has no beginning and no end (Rev. 22:13). Scripture often speaks of time in two different senses, using two different words. This difference is vital. When the Bible uses the Greek *chronos*, it speaks of time in the human sense – chronological time as we know it (see Matthew 25:19). But when the Bible uses the Greek *kairos*, it speaks of God's time – time that is eternal, unending and perfect (see 2 Cor. 6:2). It is that sense of time that we have to look forward to in the heavenly Kingdom.

Finally, we have the inclination to think that because of our great advances in technology and civilization, we're more concerned with time and scheduling than Jesus and his disciples. However, there are multiple places in the Bible where Jesus and his followers are frantically busy with the demands of their ministry (see Mark 1:32-39, Mark 6:30-33). Despite their endlessly busy schedule, Jesus and the disciples always found time to pray in quiet and remain centered in the love of God. The

Camp Shalom

A time and place apart

frantic pace of life might look different, but the nature is the same – throughout history, people have become busy and put other commitments before God.

When people become too busy with their “everyday” life, or consumed with temporal concerns, their eyes become blinded to the eternal at work within the temporal world. The giving of time to God opens our eyes to see the eternal at work in our lives, overflowing throughout all creation. Giving time to God does not make us better it just helps us to be more receptive to God’s promises.

Additional Bible Resources

- Psalm 39:5-6
 - Isaiah 49:8
 - Matthew 6:34
 - Matthew 25:14-30
 - Mark 1:32-39, Mark 5:24-34
 - Mark 6:30-33
 - Luke 10:38-42
 - Romans 13:11-14
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31
 - 2 Corinthians 6:2
 - 2 Corinthians 9:6-15
 - Ephesians 5:15-17
 - 2 Thessalonians 3:11
 - James 4:13-15
 - 2 Peter 3:8
- Life is short and nothing compared to God’s existence
“In a time of favor I answer you...”:
Don’t worry about tomorrow, just worry about today:
Parable of the talents:
Christ was pressed for time, super busy:
Busy apostles needing time to rest, no time even to eat:
Mary & Martha with Jesus:
You know the time, salvation is at hand; live as in the daylight:
Do everything for the glory of God:
“Now is the day of salvation”:
Who sows bountifully will reap bountifully:
Make the most of your days, because our time is evil:
Don’t be a busybody, but be busy with good things:
Don’t worry about tomorrow; do God’s will today:
God’s time is not like ours, a thousand years to one day: