



A Time for Everything

Lesson 1

A Time to Prioritize

Prayer

Introductory Activity

Prioritizing Priorities: Prioritizing is an important skill to have both personally and congregationally. We will cover both throughout this study, but this introductory activity asks you to think about congregational priorities. Read 1 Peter 2:2, Matthew 20:25-28, and Matthew 28:18-20 as a whole class. Discuss what these passages say about our mission as Christians.

Now, in your smaller groups, list up to 15 things you do as a congregation. Rank them in order of importance and explain why you ranked them the way you did based on the mission Jesus gives us as his church.

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Rightly Ordered Love

1. In his "City of God," St. Augustine talks about rightly ordered love. He calls God the "highest good." He makes the point that if we love anything/one more than God, even good gifts, those things become evil because we cannot properly show love for others if we do not properly love God first. That is such a challenge! Read the passages below and discuss the questions.

- *"They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen." (Romans 1:25)*
- *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33)*
- *"Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8)*

This is a list of relationships/responsibilities/blessings that God places into our lives:
Work, God, Spouse, Child(ren), Hobbies, Friends, Those in Need.

- How would God have us rightly order these loves? Explain your reasoning.

Personal Reflection: What does the order look like in your life?

- How does the world order these loves? Explain your reasoning.

We hear Jesus tell us *"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,"* (Matthew 6:21) and join with St. Augustine's prayer: *"Set love in order in me, Lord."*

2. In addition to Matthew 6:21 above, what important points do the following passages make about personal and congregational priorities?

- *"Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early*

and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.” (Psalm 127:1-2)

- *“That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.” (Ecclesiastes 3:13)*

3. How does the fact that we have eternity before us help us prioritize how we use our time on earth?

- *“Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.” (Galatians 6:8)*

Group Discussion

Read Romans 12:1 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. You have 24 hours in a day and *each one* is used to glorify God. How does that knowledge:

- Convict you?

- Bind you?

- Free you?

- Motivate you?

Read Luke 10:38-42 and Ephesians 5:15-16. Individually, list five important things you want to use your time for to accomplish each day. Share your list with your group and discuss how to accomplish your priorities (i.e., what needs to be sacrificed to make the most of every opportunity?)

Agree/Disagree: Sometimes, you are just too busy to do something.

Closing Activity

Back to the Beginning. In the introductory activity, you listed and prioritized ten things you do as a congregation. Imagine you are starting a new congregation. What five things would you want to make sure you used the majority of your time to do? (i.e., Evaluate the introductory list. What might you consider sacrificing and why?)