



A Time for Everything

Lesson 3

A Time to Plan

Prayer

Introductory Activity

Planning, Just for Fun

We give our best to God when we plan. You could even say that to give God our best, planning is necessary. Proverbs 21:5 says, *"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty."* Of course, anything good that comes from our planning is still solely because of God's blessing. Proverbs 16:9 says, *"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps."*

Divide up these scenarios by group.

Group 1 – Brainstorm what it would look like if a restaurant did:

- No planning
- Poor planning
- Great planning

Group 2 – Brainstorm what it would look like if a bride and groom in preparation for a wedding did:

- No planning
- Poor planning
- Great planning

Group 3 – Brainstorm what it would look like if a family in preparation for a two-week road trip vacation did:

- No planning
- Poor planning
- Great planning

Group 4 – Brainstorm what it would look like if a state or local government did:

- No planning
- Poor planning
- Great planning

Then all groups consider:

Brainstorm what it would look like if a church did:

- No planning
- Poor planning
- Great planning

God Plans, So We Plan

1. Our God is a planning God. He created the world with the plan to live with humanity in perfection, but when sin ruined this world, God immediately announced his plan to send a Savior thousands of years in advance: *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel"* (Genesis 3:15). Throughout Scripture we see time and again that our God makes very specific plans. Look up the following passages and identify how God is a planning God.

- Genesis 41:34-36 -
- Jeremiah 29:10-11 -
- John 14:1-3 -
- Revelation 1:1 -
- Your own scriptural example:

We Plan, Trusting God

2. There is such a thing as bad planning! Based on the passages below, name two things that make a plan “bad.” Give a “real life” example of each.

Luke 12:16-21 -

Luke 14:28-32 -

3. Look up Acts 16:6-10. What does this section of Scripture say to us about God’s plans versus our plans?
4. In our personal and congregational plans, what does it mean to “commit [your plans] to the Lord?”

“Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” (Proverbs 16:3)

“Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” (James 4:15)

We Trust, God Blesses

5. As we plan, we are guided by God’s Word, and we make use of our reason and logic. Based on the passages below, what encouragement does God give us as we make our personal and congregational plans?

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5,6)

“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matthew 6:33,34)

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Philippians 4:6-8)

Group Discussion

Planning helps us clarify where we want to go and keeps us focused on what is most important.

- List three things you currently plan for in your personal life.
- Understanding the blessings of planning, come up with two things you would like to start planning for.
- Then share one of each of those things with your group.

A common axiom in planning goes something like this: “We don’t need to plan the things we love to do, but we do need to plan the things we don’t like (or are hard to do!).” How is this true in your personal life? How is it true for a/your congregation?

- Think of one thing your church does well when it comes to planning.
- Think of one thing your church could improve on when it comes to planning.
- **What is the next step to get there?**

Just because we plan, it does not mean that we will be blessed in the way we think we should be. Proverbs 19:21 says, *“Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails.”* What a comfort because his way is always better than ours! Often, planners will talk about making “SMART” goals (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**imed). Those are things *we* can do and God blesses us as he sees fit. We don’t dictate to him what the results should be. Now, dream a little!

- What is one thing you wish for your congregation in the future? (i.e., what God controls)
- What is a “SMART” goal you can set to work toward that future? (i.e., what we control)

Closing Activity

Haiku!

Take three minutes to write a Haiku illustrating truths about planning, either personal or corporate. Haiku are three-line poems with the syllable structure of 5-7-5.