

A Time for Everything

Ecclesiastes 3:3-8

(Read this slowly; think about it...Repeat)

There is an appointed time for everything.
And there is a time for every event under heaven—
A time to give birth and a time to die;
A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.
A time to kill and a time to heal;
A time to tear down and a time to build up.
A time to weep and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn and a time to dance.
A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones;
A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing.
A time to search and a time to give up as lost;
A time to keep and a time to throw away.
A time to tear apart and a time to sew together;
A time to be silent and a time to speak.
A time to love and a time to hate;
A time for war and a time for peace.

August Birthdays

6 GiGi Zamarripa	19 Keith Lovelady	26 Al Pena
4 Noah Perales	25 Pat Limburg	31 Aubrey Pena
12 Debbie Hoffman		

(Note: if anyone is “missed” here, let Jim know)

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher
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Compassion and Caring...

Old Age: Taking Care, or Taking Control

There is an interesting story in a recent Sports Illustrated. It seems that some con artist is going around to aging athletes who have Alzheimer's posing as 'Dr. James Hartman.' He claims to be purchasing memorabilia for a museum. He takes their trophies, game balls, jerseys... and leaves them with a rubber check. The article ends only half joking that the writer hopes this person is caught and hanged. Such abuse of the elderly gets our ire up...we want somebody to do something.

We should stop to consider. We might do, by neglect, what another does by fraud. At age twenty-six, Pat Moore performed a remarkable experiment. An industrial designer, Moore wanted a better understanding of senior adults, so for three years she frequently disguised herself as an eighty-five-year-old woman. She used a professional makeup artist and visited 116 cities in fourteen states and two Canadian provinces in her elderly persona. From her experience, Moore estimates that one of 25 seniors is abused, with most victims being over 75. She was impressed with the compassion and care she received from senior adults when she was in character, but she received harsher treatment from younger generations.

How do we apply the Golden Rule (“*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them...*” Matthew 7:12) to the older members of our families, communities, and churches? Perhaps the better question is, 'How will we want to be treated in our later years?'

We will want others to take time for our loneliness. Imagine being surrounded by the same four walls for twenty-four hours a day every day! Think what it must be like to say good-bye to many of your lifelong associates. Ann Landers once ran this thought-provoking entry:

Dear Ann Landers: In the last decade I have witnessed an alarming disrespect for the elderly. In many cultures, old folks are venerated and valued, but not in America. I find this sad and frightening. A few years ago, you printed a column about grandfather's birthday. I showed it to my grandchildren. They were visibly moved and, I might add, have been a lot more attentive to their grandparents since then. Will you please run it again? St. Petersburg

Dear St. Pete: With pleasure. Here it is. It was grandfather's birthday. He was 79. He got up early, showered, combed his hair and put on his Sunday best so he would look nice when they came.

He skipped his daily walk to the town café where he had coffee with his cronies. He wanted to be home when they came. He put his porch chair on the sidewalk so he could get a better view of the street when they drove up to help celebrate his birthday. At noon he got tired but decided to forgo his nap so he could be there when they came. Most of the rest of the afternoon he spent near the telephone so he could answer it when they called.

He has five married children, 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. One son and daughter live within ten miles of his place. They hadn't visited him for a long time. But today was his birthday and they were sure to come.

At supper he sat on the porch waiting. At 8:30 he went to his room to prepare for bed. Before retiring he left a note on the door... 'Be sure to wake me up when they come.' It was grandfather's birthday. He was 79.

In our hustle and bustle world, it is hard to find time to sit with aged relatives and fellow Christians, and if we are not careful, we will neglect this duty-and corrupt our religion. James said, "*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world*" (James 1:27). 'Visit' here means to 'see after the needs.' Certainly one of these needs is conversation and discussion. John added, "*But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth*" (1 John 3:17-18). Let us use our days wisely (Ephesians 5:16) and give one once in a while to let an elderly person know he or she is needed and wanted.

We will want others to have patience with our infirmities. Most of us will better be able to identify with Solomon than Moses. Moses

was an exception to the rule of human aging. At his death, his "eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated" (Deuteronomy 34:7). Most of us will wear glasses; most of us will not be able to bench press at seventy what we could at twenty. Solomon, on the other hand, described the aging process with which most of us can identify: "*In the day when the keeper of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders [teeth] cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows [eyes] be darkened, And the doors [ears] shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird [cannot sleep]...afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail....*" (Ecclesiastes 12:3-5).

In an award-winning article entitled, *A View From 80*, Malcolm Cowley described what it was like to be old: '...when it becomes an achievement to do thoughtfully, step by step, what you once did instinctively-when he can't stand on one leg and has trouble pulling on his pants-when he spends more time looking for things than he spends using them after he has found them-when he listens hard to jokes and catches everything but the snapper.'

What's the application? Patience. Though the old man is only going forty miles per hour down the interstate, or grandma takes forever to get to the car, or granddad must be told everything three times, let us "*add to our temperance, patience*" (2 Peter 1:6). To make sure an old person hears you, touch his arm and have him look at you as you speak. Speak clearly, hold up objects to which you refer, and give her clues to establish a context without sounding impatient or upset. As for vision, keep in mind that older people need better lighting and have trouble adapting to the dark. Night lights should be included in each room.

We will want physical assistance. We hope to be able to provide for ourselves all of our lives, but we may need physical help later in life. One comedian quipped, 'Money can't buy health. And it's getting so it can't support sickness either.' With the increasing costs of medication and hospitalization, we may find more truth than humor in that statement. Paul taught that these costs are to be provided by the family, as they are able: "*If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed*" (1 Timothy 5:16; cf. Matthew 15:1-9). This may include finances, seeing after physical work they cannot do, or providing health care.

Solomon bears repeating: "*Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old*" (Proverbs 23:22). As Israel's Premier Golda Meir said: 'Seventy is not a sin.'