



A Time for Everything

Lesson 1

A Time to Prioritize

PRAYER

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Prioritizing is an important skill to have both personally and congregationally. We will cover both in this study, but this activity asks you to think about congregational priorities. What do the following passages say about our mission as Christians?

1 Peter 2:2-3 *Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

Matthew 20:25-28 *Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Matthew 28:18-20 *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

In groups of 3-4, list up to 10 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.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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 following passages and discuss.

Romans 1:25 *They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.*

Matthew 6:33 *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

1 Timothy 5:8 *Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

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?

Psalm 127:1-2 *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.*

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

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

GROUP DISCUSSION

Romans 12:1 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

You and I have 24 hours in a day and each one is used to glorify God. How does that knowledge:

- Convict you?
- Free you?
- Motivate you?

Luke 10:38-42 *As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."*

Ephesians 5:15-16 *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

Individually, list five important things you want to use your time for to accomplish each day. Share your list with a friend or spouse and discuss how to accomplish your priorities (i.e., what needs to be sacrificed to make the most of every opportunity?)

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 1.) | 2.) | 3.) |
| 4.) | 5.) | |

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?)

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 1.) | 2.) | 3.) |
| 4.) | 5.) | |