

LEISURE?

There is a story told of a gentleman who traveled this country giving workshops on Time Management to various companies and corporations. One morning after a two-hour session he invited his listeners to stretch their legs for a few minutes. While they did so he reached under the table and placed a large wide-mouthed jar on the table before him. He then took a sack and placed it next to the jar and removed from the sack a series of rocks, each one the size of a fist. Carefully he placed the rocks in the jar until there was no more room. He looked up and realized that every eye was on him and so he asked his audience if they thought the jar was full. They nodded their assent. "Not quite." He reached beneath the table again and took out a second sack which contained small bits of gravel. He slowly poured the gravel into the jar filling all the spaces between the rocks. Again he asked his question but this time they were on to him. No. The jar was not full.

He reached beneath the table to extract a sack of sand which he then poured slowly into the jar. Again he asked if it were full. Again there was dissent. He then reached for a pitcher of water and slowly poured it into the jar until the rim was reached. "Is it full now?" "Yes." And so it was. Then he asked, "Given all we have discussed this morning, what is the meaning of this little exercise?" After some thought one man raised his hand and volunteered. "I think it means that no matter how busy you get, if you take your responsibilities and break them up into small pieces you can actually find time to fit more into a crowded schedule." "Good try," he answered, "but not on target." The point of this exercise is this: If you don't put the big rocks into the jar first, you will never be able to get them in later on."

Time. We live in time. We run out of time. We arrive in the nick of time. We kill time. We sometimes act like we have all the time in the world. But one thing is for sure. We are aware of time. We each have an attitude towards time. Am I at the mercy of time? Or, do I make sure that time is always at my disposal?

I had a week of vacation time from the 4th to the 10th of this month. There were assorted family members and friends down throughout the week. But I got time for my naps. I knew I needed to catch up on my rest. And I did. I made sure I carved enough time out of each day for a wonderful nap. Isn't that how we often think? Use this time to catch up on my rest so I can return to the demands of my work life?

Jesus says to his apostles today to "Come away to a deserted place and rest awhile." He and the Twelve try to put they don't succeed. That happens to us too at times. We try to arrange our time but we are not in control of all of our situation. Jesus wants them to be replenished but more than that. There is a tone of leisure. Come away WITH ME and rest awhile. It's the WITH ME part that we sometimes miss as an important component of getting our rest.

When I was growing up on Sunday afternoons in the summer there was this thing that could best be called leisure. There was time for... Time to sit out back under a tree. Time to do a Crossword puzzle. Time to lay in the hammock and listen on the radio to the baseball game. There was time for board games. There was time to read. There was time. Ample time. Enough time. Time without pressure. It was part of Sunday. We could do this because everything was pretty much closed on Sunday so being with family and enjoying various leisurely pursuits were what you did. And it was good. Very good. It actually fed us. It actually calmed us. It actually helped us to be at

peace. Part of the Lord's Day. A day different from other days. Some focus on the Lord and some time for ourselves and our families.

What they called "servile work" was not allowed. Ordinary work. Things you could do on any other day. No. This day was to be set aside for ourselves, not our tasks or responsibilities or our jobs. We were able to get out from under all that and just BE. The Sabbath was made for us. A real gift. We owe worship to God but we owe this gift to ourselves.

I have a proposal for you. Take some time this very day. This afternoon. Think about how you look at time. Time throughout the week. Time on the weekend. Is there anything even close to leisure in your life on a regular basis? How would you describe your own personal attitude toward time? Ask yourself if you think that there is need for some change in the way you look at time, think about time, perceive time?

Ask Our Lord if there is something He would like to reveal to you about your attitude toward time that you may not be aware of? Trust Him. He will not beat you up with anything He reveals. It will be for your good. And if there is something, don't resist and don't hesitate to embrace the need to tweak your attitude toward time. So that it is no longer a cruel and demanding tyrant to which you must always submit, but also a genial opportunity to present yourself to our Lord so he can do in you too the re-creation he is accomplishing in the world itself.

Don't be afraid to take some time. And to thank him for reminding you that He is here for you—as food for your journey, especially on the Lord's Day.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace.