



REALITY

A Time to Wonder

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

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Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

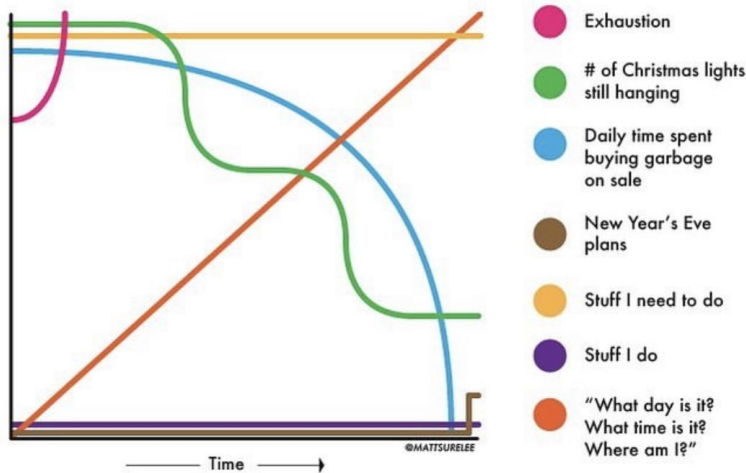
There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
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.

What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better

for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.

THE WEEK AFTER CHRISTMAS



“Christmas is over and we have arrived at the most wonderful time of the year I call it ‘Dead Week,’ a time when nothing counts, and when nothing is quite real.”

HELENA FITZGRALD,
WRITER

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“Dead Week isn’t a week off for everyone, or at least the thing it is a week off from isn’t work. Even so, it is still the closest thing we have in our society to some kind of a communal pause. Nothing is ever as quiet as it is during those few days, cities emptied out and small towns sleepier than usual, people drifting around not interested in accomplishing anything. There is a collective sense that, for these few days, we are not going to do any more than we must. It doesn’t really matter if you don’t brush your hair, if you stay up all night, if you don’t send that work email. Many people aren’t checking email anyway, and nobody wants to be asked to do more work than they absolutely have to. Dead week is our only time off from the forward-motion drive of the rest of the year, “It is a time against ambition and against striving. Whatever we hoped to finish is either finished or it’s not going to happen this week, and all our successes and failures from the previous year are already tallied up. It’s too late for everything; Dead Week is the luxurious relief of giving up.”

- Helena Fitzgerald

Time

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break 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 away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:9-11

What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

Psalm 90:12

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

We use our time to wonder with God.

Wonder: rapt attention or astonishment at something awesomely mysterious or new to one's experience

Psalm 65:8

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades,
you call forth songs of joy.

“Hope is possible precisely because you don’t think the present is all there is. And you also don’t think that humans are the only agents in this, that the God of the cosmos who fires the world with love is out ahead of us, which is precisely why there can always be new possibilities. I think that’s radical for us to think about personally and individually. And I think it’s radical for us to think about collectively and communally.”

- James K.A. Smith

Jeremiah 6:16

Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.

“When we submit our lives to what we read in Scripture, we find that we are not being led to see God in our stories but our stories in God’s. God is the larger context and plot in which our stories find themselves.”

- Eugene Peterson

“Without wonder, we approach spiritual formation as a self-help project. We employ techniques. We analyze gifts and potentialities. We set goals. We assess progress. Spiritual formation is reduced to cosmetics. Without wonder, the motivational energies in spiritual formation get dominated by anxiety and guilt. Anxiety and guilt restrict; they close us in on ourselves. They isolate us with feelings of inadequacy or

unworthiness; they reduce us to ourselves at our worst. Spiritual formation is distorted into moral workaholism or pious athleticism.”

- Eugene Peterson

“I wonder...what if...let's try.”

1. Wonder begins in prayer.

I wonder how we can use our time to wonder with God?

2. Wonder is a way of life.

I wonder what it would like to allow Jesus to shape my time this year?

3. Wonder is done together.

I wonder what kind of year this would mean for me if I gave my time to God? What about my friends? For our community? For others I may be unaware of?