

Protecting Your Private Time with Jesus

When You Have Lots To Do

*“The news about [Jesus] spread all the more so that crowds of people came to hear him and be healed of their sicknesses.”*¹ Multitudes of people with legitimate and pressing needs required his attention, his touch. Jesus felt compelled to teach and preach the good news to the crowds of people who were like sheep without a shepherd. He was well aware that they depended on him. Jesus had lots to do!

In spite of the overwhelming pressures of time, *“Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”*² In order to give himself to private time with his heavenly Father he purposefully *withdrew* from life’s demands. He repelled the temptation to become so intertwined with life that no time remained for sharing himself with his Father in heaven.

When you have lots to do, resolutely protect your private time with Jesus!

“You’re Not Praying.”

As a young successful pastor I worked many, many hours. My work day consisted of mornings, afternoons and evenings six days a week. But one day, when I was in my late twenties, the Holy Spirit plainly spoke to my heart, *“you are not praying.”* I responded with arguments in my favor. *“Lord, I pray when I am driving my car, when I am mowing my lawn or doing my exercise walking.”* But I knew what He meant. I spent almost no private time communing with the Lord in praise, thanksgiving and adoration. I allowed busyness to divert me from the perfect will of God.

Reading Scripture early in the morning was easy, enjoyable and profitable. But for some reason I had failed to protect my private fellowship time with Jesus. Therefore, I finally admitted my guilt of not setting aside a portion of my schedule for being alone with him.

A Protection Plan

As I considered my daily schedule, I decided on a plan for being alone with him. In reality, I was about to embark on the most thrilling adventure of my life.

Set an Appointment with Jesus

I chose to withdraw from my daily schedule at 4:00 p.m. and remain in

Jesus' presence until 5:00 pm. This became my appointment with the Lord.

This sixty minutes became a time goal which helped me stay on course. The first few days of a regimented method of being with Jesus proved quite challenging. I felt like God moved to the other side of the universe. During my hour with the Lord I often looked at my watch and couldn't believe time moved so slowly. But since I had a time goal—a target—I persisted. After several days I knelt as usual and looked up at the ceiling and blurted out words my mind hadn't considered. *"God, you have me for an hour whether or not you want me."* Immediately the Lord's presence filled that little bedroom. I experienced a one person revival as the Holy Spirit poured himself into me! From then on to the present, God and I have consistently fellowshiped in intimate communion. My plan for being with God has changed and matured, but it has endured 40 years because I vigilantly protected my private time with Jesus.

Let me encourage you to set appointments with the Lord. This appointment becomes time set aside exclusively for interacting with the Spirit of Jesus.

Everyone lives by appointments: mealtime, jobs, school, sleep and awake, church attendance, recreation. Appointment making and appointment keeping leads into success. Should making and keeping appointments with the Lord surprise us? Not at all!

Select a time of day when you are at your best. Then, resolve to follow Jesus' example of giving himself to Father. Withdraw to a place where you can be with heavenly Father.

Set a Time Goal

Time goals fill our days: 8-12 hours on the job, so many minutes to drive to and from work, fellowship with family, meals, personal hygiene and on and on. All humans live by time and constantly estimate how much time this or that activity will take. Is that surprising? Not at all! God set aside 24 hours each week and called it *The Lord's Day*. He designed all creation to operate according to his time table.

Now that we have set our appointment with God, let's choose a time goal for spending with the Lord. Fifteen minutes, twenty minutes, half an hour? Keep your appointment with the Lord.

Appointment keeping and holding to your time goal equips you to protect your private time with the Lord. Repel every idea that attempts talking you out of your time with Jesus. We are disciples of Jesus and disciples discipline themselves to walking in Jesus' footsteps. Armed with an appointment and a time goal to be with Jesus push back the temptation to be a follower of Jesus who haphazardly spends time with him. Be a disciple who walks at his side in intimate fellowship!

Always remember the promise recorded in Hebrews 11:6: *“He rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

Footnotes:

1. Luke 5:15
2. Luke 5:16



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