

29They left the synagogue and went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. **30**Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed, sick with a fever. Without delay they told Jesus about her. **31**He went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she began to serve them. **32**That evening, when the sun had set, the people kept bringing to him all who were sick and demon-possessed. **33**The whole town gathered at the door. **34**He healed many people who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons. But he did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew who he was.

35Jesus got up early in the morning, while it was still dark, and went out. He withdrew to a solitary place and was praying there. **36**Simon and his companions searched for him, **37**and, when they found him, they said to him, “Everyone is looking for you!”

38He told them, “Let's go somewhere else, to the neighboring villages, so that I can preach there too. In fact, that is why I have come.” **39**Then he went throughout the whole region of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Dear Brothers and Sister in Christ,

In the summer of '98 there was a planning meeting at an architect's office in Phoenix. We were discussing the building of a church on this property. The architect knew we were going to worship, but an important question was “*How do you visualize your worship service?*”

Behind this question was the question, “*How are you planning on spending your time as you gather in this church building?*” We spent time

trying to think of all the scenarios of worship and fellowship. Our answers helped us and the architect focus on the amount of space and the type of



Meeting at architects office in 1998

rooms that were needed. Then the architect spent his time drawing up various blueprints of a future church building.

Using our time for planning still happens in the church today. Right now your pastor and Sunday school staff are planning for the Children's and Youth Christmas service. Time is being spent on planning Thanksgiving and Christmas services.

Do you plan to use the time God has given you? Do you know what to do with your time? I won't be able to answer every question. However, looking at Jesus' use of time will help us to see how God wants us to use our time. Time is a precious gift from the Lord and we want to use it well. We join Moses in his prayer in Psalm 90, "**Teach us to number our days aright...**" Today as we continue our series of messages on our use of time we remember that in the time God has given us there is **A Time to Plan.**

1. Plan on Jesus setting you up to serve for his sake.

In Mark 1 Jesus had cast a demon out of a man in the synagogue in Capernaum. Satan was especially active in the places where Jesus was. Jesus used the opportunity to serve. He also wanted others to serve and support his ministry. For this reason he went to Peter's home.

A. The account of Peter's mother-in-law is remarkable and useful to us. Peter's mother-in-law had a role. At this time it intersected with Jesus' ministry. She would have been the leading hostess at the house where Jesus was staying. However, she was sick and unable to function.

B. Mark tells us what Jesus did. **31He went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she began to serve them.** Jesus healed her. She was completely well. There were no lingering effects. Jesus put her in a position to serve.

Jesus will put you in a position to serve in different ways at different times. You serve wherever you are. During the winter season we have a lot of special services and events at church. Since you have things going on in your life away from church, you will have to plan to attend and help out at church. Jesus will give us time to serve. When that opportunity is there, we want to pray for strength to serve and fulfill our purpose.

2. Plan on Jesus helping you to undo the devil's work.

We know from the Bible that devil inflicts physical and mental harm on people. (1 Samuel 16:14; Acts 10:38; Acts 19:12) In some cases he was also possessing people. Jesus used his time to undo the devil's work. We can plan on Jesus helping us to also undo the devil's work.

A. There was a need for God's grace and power to reach people. People were in need due to the devil's inflicting misery. **"32...the people kept bringing to him all who were sick and demon-possessed. 33The whole town gathered at the door."** Jesus did not ignore the growing crowd. Later on Jesus' followers would take on that role of helping people.

B. Jesus has overcome the devil's work. We see him doing this in healing the sick and casting out demons.

1. He did more. Revelation 12:10, **"I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying: Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, the one who accuses them before our God day and night."** The accuser is Satan. What does he accuse us of? Our sins! "You didn't serve!" You didn't fulfill God's purpose for you. That can make us feel awful. Jesus knew his purpose and his hour. Romans 5:6, **"For at the appointed time, while we were still helpless, Christ died for the ungodly."** The devil accuses, but we are forgiven.



2. As we serve Jesus uses his power to help us undo the devil's work. We bring God's word to people who feel awful. We tell them about Jesus paying for sin. They have peace, Satan loses his grip.

3. Plan on Jesus moving you to pray often.

It is surprising that Jesus does not rest up for long. We heard in verse 35, **"Jesus got up early in the morning, while it was still dark, and went out. He withdrew to a solitary place and was praying there."** Jesus was moved to pray and he moves us to pray.

A. Jesus was moved to pray, because even he could not be with everyone all the time during his earthly ministry. There was more work than there was

time in the day. One point Jesus commented, “**The harvest is plentiful.**” So he prayed to the Father knowing there was help.

B. We can’t do it all. We get frustrated and fearful. Pray for strength. Pray for peace. Pray for help. The Lord answers.

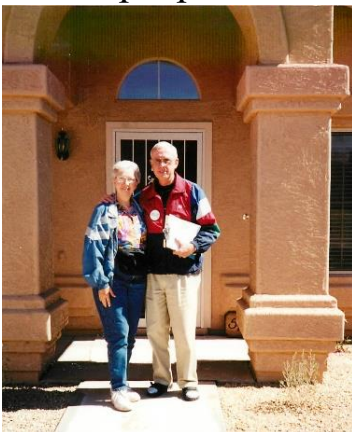
He has provided prayers that people have written. An example is found with the *Start of Work* devotion page 240 CWH (blue hymnal). There is this prayer that is about our usage of time. (read) This is one example.

We give thanks, O Lord, for the rest of the past night and for the gift of a new day with its opportunities for pleasing you. Grant that we may pass its hours in the freedom of your service and, when evening comes, give you thanks again. Amen. (Another prayer: Prayer of the Day on page 6, worship folder.)

4. Plan on Jesus leading you to follow God’s plan.

The desire of the disciples was to have Jesus stay there and help the people from their own community. Jesus however realized that there were more people in other places who needed help. It would have been easier to stay in Capernaum, but he followed his heavenly Father’s plan, God’s will. This is important for you or me. This is what we need to do.

In serving, there is the temptation to simply serve people in the easiest way possible.



Retirees Dan & Frieda Carow door to door 1998

Sometimes we have to try and help in ways that aren’t as easy, but can end being a lot of fun. Some of our people were willing to go door to door in the early days. (pic) Others helped out in other ways.



Sunday School Kickoff 2005

What does serving look like in your life? The Lord Jesus will put you in a position to serve. When he does, we want to do God’s will. The Lord will help us to do what he wants. He helps us to make a difference in people’s lives. We should plan day to day to make use of our time in things we know the Lord wants us to do.

Conclusion: King Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 3, verse 1, **“For everything there is an appointed time. There is an appropriate time for every activity under heaven.”** In the second line of verse three he writes, **“a time to tear down and a time to build.”** In 1998 the people of SotV did a



lot of prayerful planning. In 1999-2000 those plans were put into action with the Lord’s blessing.



We plan and

carry out worship, Bible class and other activities so you are blessed. The Lord in turn wants you to use your time well. That usually starts with some planning. We learn through Jesus that our purpose has to do with undoing the devil’s work by helping others. Pray that the Lord makes this happen. He will help. It is his will that you use your time to glorify him. Amen.