

Sunday 1 May 2016



**Time
Talents
Treasure**

Intro

Those of us who own a car know that once it is 3 years old we have to get it MOT'd which is just a check of mechanical parts to make sure it is road worthy

If you have worked in a shop you will have had to do a Stock Check at some point to make sure that you know just what stock you have and the state it is in

Many of us will have had an annual work review

Even our lovely Church Wardens have an annual visit from the Area Dean to check that all the various bits of paper work that we have to keep as a church are up to date and being kept accurately. Please remember them and pray for them this Wednesday when this years inspection is happening.

And I think it is good for us to sometimes give ourselves a Spiritual review or stock check. To actually take time to think and pray about how we are doing in our Christian Faith, how are we doing in our journey as followers of Jesus.

And so during May we are going to have a mini series call TTT where we will be considering all that God has generously given us, how we think about that, and how we use all that He has given us. Every week as part of our worship together we say these words

Everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.

I wonder how much thought you have given to those words and what they mean to you? These words actually come from 1 Chron. 29:14 and refer to more than our money

I have written a short article in this months Hoot that gives dates for Midweek TTT and introduces the theme a bit more. Use of our Time Talents and Treasures gives a material and physical expression to the love and faith we profess for God and our neighbour, and I am excited about what we may learn together about God's loving, generous heart and how we respond to that by giving back to Him some of what He has blessed us with

Time

So let's get started on this weeks T which is Time....!

How many of us have said, in the last week, something along the lines of ...

I can't believe it is May already. Where is this year going?

The years just seem to go faster and faster!

Have you got a minute?

I know I have - probably all of them at least once!

Well. Fact... There are still 60 minutes in an hour and 24 hours in a day and therefore 168 hours in a week. And they are not going any faster. Honest! And it is the same for all of us. One of the few things that is exactly the same for everyone here no matter our age, ability or background. We all have exactly the same amount of time in a day and a week and that is the same as it was 5 years ago, 10 years ago...

So what do we do with that time? What could we do with that time? What should we do with that time?

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and Genesis 1

Some of us, I expect, will be familiar with a passage from Ecclesiastes 3 where it talks about there being a time for everything. A time to be born and to die, to weep and to laugh, to keep silent and to speak, to plant and to uproot... Verse 1 says *there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens.*

You see, right back at the beginning of time as we understand it, God created a pattern, a sequence. He created times of darkness and times of light which He called night and day. He created the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night (the sun and the moon) He created seed bearing plants that go on to produce fruit. He created living creatures of the sea, the air and the land. And He created mankind in His own image to rule over the land and sea with all its plants and creatures.

As this mornings reading from Isaiah says in vs 5

The Lord created the heavens and stretched them out, He spread out the earth and what come from it AND He gives breath to those who walk upon it and spirit to those who walk in it.

Our very being, the time that we have here on earth, all the different things that we can do, are given by God. He has entrusted us with dominion over all that He has made.

That involves managing our natural resources But also as the Isaiah reading says, caring for our fellow human beings - opening the eyes of the blind, bringing out the prisoners from darkness and dungeons. I think of this as pursuing justice.

Exodus 20

God also gave us 10 commandments which can help us think about what we should and shouldn't do with our time. And the 2 greatest commandments - to love the Lord your God with all your heart soul and mind, and to love our neighbour as ourself.

If we think about just one of those for a minute... '*Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy*' God himself had a day of rest at the end of creation - Day 7 he rested from all his work (2:2) Interestingly God gave us dominion over the land and creatures on day 6 then day 7 was a day of rest. Rest and Sabbath is part of God's design and plan for us A day on which we can focus on God, worship Him and spend time in rest and recreation.

How good are we at setting a day aside to spend quality time in activities that restore us, body soul and mind? Activities that help us relax and re-create us ready for the week ahead

I heard a great explanation of this once... We all have paid and unpaid work to do... assuming we have not retired from our paid work. :-) But unpaid work? well that is those things that we have to do in order for our lives to go along well. It could range from washing and ironing to gardening to checking the bank statement to sorting out our car insurance to baby sitting the grand children.... the list could go on. You get the idea But lets take gardening for example. For me gardening is one of those activities which restores me. It helps me unwind and switch off. I think of it as fun and a joy rather than a chore. So for me it is not unpaid work but recreation. So on my Sabbath day doing a spot of gardening is great. For others of you it would definitely be unpaid WORK! So avoid it on your Sabbath.

How do we use our time? Do we have a Sabbath day where we restrain from unpaid and paid work and commit to spending it restoring ourselves physically, emotionally, spiritually?

Clearly work is a part of what we are created to do. God gave us dominion over the world He created and that means working in some way to sustain that. Work is a part of our creation. But how much do we do? And how do we think about it in terms of our Christian faith. Do we just get on with it, detaching it from any link with our faith? Or do we think about it as a way of taking Jesus and His love for the world with us in to the office, the shop, the surgery, our home if we are currently full time mums or dads... or wherever it is we work...

That doesn't mean that we need to be 'preaching' at people all day long. But our lives tell a story by the way we live them, by the way we treat people and how we speak to them, by the way we conduct our role. Do we view our hours of work as a part of how we honour and serve God on a daily basis?

Do you give time in serving God in different ways through St Georges? I know that many of you do.... Many of you give a lot of time in a great variety of seen and unseen ways THANK YOU If you don't or wonder if there is something different you could do then come and have a chat with me.

I could keep going....our friendships and relationships... our care for children or elderly parents.... I hope you get what I am driving at. How do we spend our time? Do we give it much thought?

Our diaries tell us a lot about how we spend our time.

Our Facebook page tells us a lot about how we spend our time

The times on the emails that I get through from you tell me exactly what some of you are doing at 10.30pm or 11 or midnight Or 5.30am !

Is the way we spend our time good and healthy for us and honouring to the God in whom we put our faith?

Do our lives worship and honour our God who has given each and everyone of us 24 hours a day, 168 hours a week. Do we give God the best of our time OR the left overs?

He has given us the time we have... to act as stewards on His behalf. How do we use it for Him and His glory?

Could you give 5 minutes to pray every day during May? Maybe praying the Lords prayer SLOWLY line by line and see what God does in and through us.

As part of a spiritual stock check lets think over this next week about how we use our time. Let's be a bit more conscious of how we use it. How we use it to stay close to Jesus and follow Him each day and how we use it, even our ordinary situations, to bring glory and honour to Him To be His hands and feet so that we may see His Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven,,, He wants to use us. We are His hands and feet and bodies and mouth peace... Remember when Jesus told His followers whatever you did for one of these you did for me

On Wednesday 11th at 8pm in small lounge we are going to explore together what it might look like to live an ordinary day but with Jesus... thinking about the possibility of experiencing the reality of God in our everyday lives :-)