

Simple Living at St. Joseph

Time Clutter

September 2003



How do I spend my time?

How do I want to spend my time?

What time clutter will I let go?

Our society seems to be about rushing around and being hectic most of the time. The most common response to the question “How are you?” is “Busy.” We’re so busy filling up our time with things to do, but we never seem to have time for what is most important to us.



The White Rabbit was always in a hurry and running because he was "late for a very important date."

But he kept going down holes, and getting sidetracked.

Sometimes our clocks imprison us, and give us the impression that what we are doing is very important.

-Mervyn Brady



Did you miss an opportunity to see Jesus in someone else because you were too busy?

Activities for reflecting on time

- Watch the film *Groundhog Day*. What would you do if you had an unlimited amount of time?
- Are you a slave to your watch? Try spending a day without wearing it. Or a week! If that's too radical, try wearing it on the opposite wrist, so you are aware how often you check the time.
- Try spending your driving time differently: turn off the radio and make room for prayer.
- Schedule some time to just be present to people: perhaps a game night, time to share family history, or just dinner with a friend.
- Choose an activity that you would normally do with a machine and do it without it... mindfully. It could be washing your dishes, washing your car, hanging your laundry up to dry, or biking/walking to the store.

Blessed Are You, Lord Our God, Who Daily Gifts Us With Time

You who are Lord and Creator of Space and Time yet who lives beyond them, we praise You and honor You for the gift of minutes, hours, days and years.

Each second of life that You give is precious and profound.

We pause now so as not to take these gifts for granted—so that we may remember in a holy way that all time is holy, a gift which calls forth songs of gratitude from our hearts.

We pause to gratefully remember those holy persons of ages past who call us to measure time in a godly way.

We call to mind:

Noah, counting forty rainy days and nights,
Job, waiting with longing in prayerful patience,
and Mary of Nazareth, numbering her nine months.

For those persons today who call us to take time for work and for play, to make time for love and praise, to create time for rest and the leisure necessary for creation, we lift up our hearts in thanks.



We who live in the present recall the past so that by our remembrance we might more fittingly prepare for the future time.

We who stand in the middle of a trinity of time—past, present and future—do bless You, Source and Sustainer of All Seasons.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, who daily gifts us with time.

Amen+

From *Prayers For the Domestic Church: A Handbook For Worship in the Home* by Edward Hays



**TAKE
BACK
YOUR
TIME
DAY**

TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY is a nationwide initiative to “challenge the epidemic of overwork, over-scheduling and time famine that now threatens our health, our families and relationships, our communities and our environment.”

Its promoters point out the following facts:

- **We're putting in longer hours on the job** now than we

OCTOBER 24, 2003

did in the 1950s, despite promises of a coming age of leisure before the year 2000.

- **In fact, we're working more than medieval peasants did,** and more than the citizens of any other industrial country.
- **Mandatory overtime is at near record levels,** in spite of a recession.
- **On average, we work nearly nine full weeks (350 hours) LONGER per year than our peers in Western Europe.**
- **Working Americans average a little over two weeks of vacation per year, while Europeans average five to six weeks.**

Time is a family value

We Americans talk a lot about family values, but our long working hours, the longest in the modern industrial world, mean families seldom see each other. Only 25% of American families share dinner together. If we want to strengthen American families, there's no substitute for quantity time: time together keeps marriages and families together.

While affirming the importance of useful and creative work, Day organizers feel the American life has gotten out of balance. Promotional materials, resource guides, and other information is available on the website: www.timeday.org.

The Day is a project of the Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy (CRESP) at Cornell University, and an initiative of The Simplicity Forum, a leadership alliance for the Simplicity Movement — “Promoting and Honoring Simple, Just, and Sustainable Ways of Life for All.”



Ralph Keyes offers the following suggestions for how to use your time in a more fulfilling way. For the full article with more examples, see www.stewardshipparish.com.



- 1) Plan Life, Not Time.** Only after determining what we want from life (as opposed to how much we can "get done") can we change direction timewise.
- 2) Manage Time Organically.**

Time is uniform only to clocks. Our bodies keep irregular time, based on sunlight, temperature, and the uneven tempo of work and leisure which first set our inner clocks.

- Take advantage of peak periods in scheduling work. Don't stress about using every minute.
- 3) Decelerate.** Rushing is addictive. Once hooked, it's hard to remember that the fastest way of doing things isn't always the best way.
 - 4) Reduce Awareness of Time.** How often do we really need to know what time it is? The fewer reminders we have of time, the better we can make this commodity serve rather than master us.
 - 5) Pay Attention.** The chief reward for pruning hectic schedules is improved attention for those you care about.
 - 6) Accomplish More by Doing Less.** Controlling the volume of our activities makes it possible not only to ease time pressure but to get more out of life overall.
 - before adding a new activity, subtract an old one
 - accept that you can't have it all, and wouldn't want to
 - approach growing older as an excellent opportunity to ease your pace and do more of what you really want to do

Sept. 13-19 • How do I spend my time?

Studies have shown that people in the U.S. on average spend the following amount of time each week doing the following:

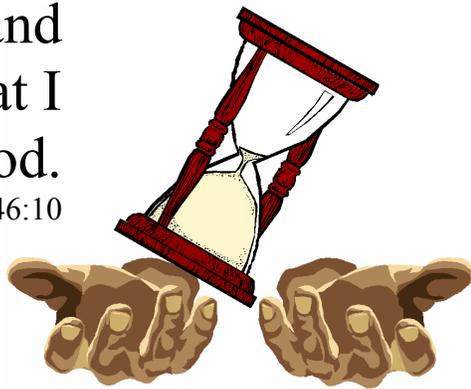
Sleeping	51 hrs 55 min	Reading	5 hrs 1 min
Working	21 hrs 28 min	Preparing meals	3 hrs 58 min
Watching TV/videos	17 hrs 58 min	Child and pet care	2 hrs 55 min
Household chores	7 hrs 42 min	Hobbies	2 hrs 6 min
Eating at home	6 hrs 11 min	Grocery shopping	1 hr 52 min
In transit/commuting	5 hrs 57 min	Exercising	1 hr 50 min
Grooming	5 hrs 43 min	Worship	1 hr 45 min

Do I prize my time as a gift from God?

When I feel frustrated with “not having enough time,” do I ask God for direction?

Be still and know that I am God.

— Psalm 46:10



Come with me, by yourselves, to a quiet place and get some rest.

—Mark 6:31

Sept. 27-Oct. 3 • What time clutter will I let

What do I want to ruthlessly weed out of my life that I may begin, even in the smallest way, to live the life I want to lead?

Car commute

Television

Extra work

Email/web

Shopping

Time for Sabbath?

sab-bath (**săb'əth**) *n.*

a day of rest and worship: Sunday for most Christians; Saturday for the Jews and a few Christians; Friday for Muslims

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” (Exodus 20:11)

Stores in the United States were not always open on Sundays. On the Lord’s Day, our whole society took time for rest. What does keeping the Sabbath holy mean for us today?

While it may be very difficult to clear a whole day each week, how can we set aside time for our own rest and God?

If we are too busy, if we are carried away every day by our projects, our uncertainty, our craving, how can we have the time to stop and look deeply into the situation—our own situation, the situation of our beloved one, the situation of our family and of our community, and the situation of our nation and of the other nations?

—Thich Nhat Hanh

Sept. 20-26 • How do I want to spend my time?

To think of one’s life as time to be invested or to sacrifice the present to an uncertain future is foolishness ... it is obvious that life is a gift rather than a reward.

Jim Corbett



- What is the life I want to lead?
- What activities add the most to my life?



St. Joseph Community
Serving Alameda, CA
and surrounding areas



For more information about simple living at St. Joseph and available resources, see: www.stewardshipparish.org