

Month #7

Lay Speaker Presentation

Speaker's Name:

Author Monte Unger once described a concept he called "time tithe." Just as God's children are encouraged to tithe their financial resources, Unger asks, "Why not decide to tithe time, save up chunks, bits and pieces of it, and give them away to people who interrupt your pre-established plans?"

That's an interesting concept, isn't it, especially in light of serving the Lord here at St. Paul's Lutheran Church? Each of us is given 168 hours a week. If we were to tithe our time and use the tithe in serving the Lord, this would amount to over 16 hours per week. Wow — would that make a difference in our church or what? But is tithing our time for the Lord's sake and the sake of the Gospel ministry here at St. Paul's Lutheran Church realistic?

It's actually a matter of priorities. We make time for what we determine to be a priority in our lives. Unger says,

We have time for such inanimate things as pieces of mail, vast sprawling shopping centers, the television program which starts at 7:30. But what about relationships with people? Isn't that a great deal of what life is all about — loving other people?

Remember Jesus? How He raced about, hurrying from one city to another, collecting great crowds on the way to give them a few minutes of hurried heaven-data, then dashing on to the next place?

No, that's not the picture of Jesus the New Testament gives. He had time for people. In a crowd, a woman touched His robe. Lots of people were probably pushing against Him, touching His robe, but He discerned the urgency in this particular touch. He stopped, taking valuable time for this "interruption."

What is really interesting is that Jesus was only on the earth for 33 years. His entire ministry encompassed a mere 36 months, a little more than 1,000 days. Yet, He had time for what He determined to be a priority, ministering to people, demonstrating God's love to them, and dying on the cross for them.

According to the authors of a controversial book, *Time for Life*, the average American has more free time today than at any time since 1965. On average, Americans spend about 45 minutes per week on all religious activities. Compare this to 15 hours per week spent watching television.

Cam Thompson has determined that on average, a person who lives to be 75 years old will have spent twenty-three years sleeping, nineteen years working, nine years playing, six years traveling, six years eating, four years sick, two years dressing, and one year in church.

Chuck Swindoll added,

The average American, in a lifetime, will have spent six months waiting at stoplights, eight months opening junk mail, a year and a half looking for lost stuff, and five years standing in lines of various types.

That's why what an old sage wrote is very important:

More time is wasted not in hours, but in minutes. A bucket with a small hole in the bottom gets just as empty as a bucket that is deliberately kicked over.

As you think about the wisdom of that comparison, please think about the time tithe. It's an interesting concept, isn't it? Will you be one who tithes the time God gives to you this week in Christian service in this ministry?