

Time: Your Greatest Investment

Doug Hamilton

If you have been to a funeral lately, you might have noticed a pattern. Those in attendance are likely saying things like, “I remember that time that....” or “Once, a long time ago, we did something together.” The reason for this practice is because our relationships are found in moments of TIME shared with one another. Question: What is the #1 investment that you can make toward evangelism in the church? Answer: Your TIME.

Your TIME is the foundation of every relationship you will ever have, either good or bad. It is the one factor that determines the success of our evangelistic efforts no matter what path we choose to carry it out.

Jesus invested time in the apostles and vice-versa.

- He spent the last 3 ½ years of His life with these twelve men.
- He ate many meals with them, including enormous feasts on the mountainsides, a Last Supper in an upper room and fried fish on a beach.
- He built memories with them as He traveled all around the region, encountering many different people in many different situations.
- They were building memories with Him as He walked on water, healed the lame, the blind, the deaf and the mute.
- They were there with Him building memories as Jesus cast out demons, calmed the angry sea, multiplied fish and bread and taught in parables.

They were with Jesus, building the relationship with their Savior. Can you imagine some the memories that they held in their heads following the crucifixion?

- “Jesus, remember that time those Pharisees confronted You, but were shamed to silence with Your teaching?”
- “Jesus, remember that time You wept near the tomb of Lazarus?”
- “Remember that time you walked on the sea, Peter started sinking and you grabbed his hand?”
- Remember that time You told us to drop the nets on the other side of the boat and we caught all those fish?”

They had a personal relationship with Jesus. There were so many times shared with the apostles that one of them wrote in *John 21:25* *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.*

The Playhouse

Many years ago, there was a father in pursuit of career ambitions, going back to school and consuming his time with non-family events. He had a young daughter that wanted him to build a playhouse, to which he promised. She had a little mailbox already purchased and wanted to use that for her new playhouse. Weeks passed by and no time was set aside by the father to build the playhouse, so the little mailbox rested on the dresser in the corner. Weeks turned into months and months to years, resulting in the

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gathering of dust on the little mailbox, causing the young girl to put off her special dream that she shared with her delaying father.

Finally the day would come to build the house, but the father decided to take the easy route by going down to Home Depot and choosing a pre-made model. The young girl was so excited to finally get a playhouse for her little mailbox that she had been saving for years, but this would not be, for something very sad had taken place. When the little girl that had waited for ages to get a playhouse from her father tried to go inside, she actually had outgrown the unit, getting stuck in the door. The father earned his training and his new career. He had lost the great moment of building not only a playhouse for the daughter, but also a memory that would have strengthened his relationship with her.

We must take the time to invest TIME in others!

Paul invested time in Timothy's life.

- **Paul guided Timothy as a father.** *Acts 16:1-3 And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek,² and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium.³ Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.*
- **Paul instructed Timothy in the Christian ways as a father.** *1 Cor 4:17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.*
- **Paul knew Timothy's demeanor as a father.** *Phil 2:20-22 For I have no one {else} of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.²¹ For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.²² But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child {serving} his father.*
- **Paul encouraged Timothy as a father.** *2 Tim 2:1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

Paul spent a great deal of time with Timothy, resulting in a great relationship. Is it any wonder that we find Paul asking for Timothy to come to him in the closing hours of his life.

- 2 Tim 4:9 Make every effort to come to me soon...
- 2 Tim 4:21 Make every effort to come before winter.

The time we spend with others in and out of the church can become the greatest ingredient for the evangelism we do here. If we will just take the time to invest some TIME in others, it will make all the difference in the world.

- Our ministries are simply vehicles to allow us to invest some time in others for the purpose of building a personal relationship with them. Once this occurs, we

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will be able to interest them in another relationship with Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior. That is the purpose of the ministries, the spending of time with us and the spending of time with Jesus.

Ministry = TIME + PEOPLE + GOSPEL

- If there is a gospel presentation without the TIME of a personal relationship, then it is not a ministry.
- If there is an organized effort designed to invest TIME in a person, but no GOSPEL for the transitioning into a relationship with Jesus Christ, then there is no ministry

There are so many ministries available, but they must lead us to people and the people to Christ:

- We have the CAR REPAIR MINISTRY to build a personal relationship with the broken-down car people with the idea of turning their hearts to Jesus, the One that blessed them with the car.
- We have a CHILDREN'S EDUCATION MINISTRY to build a personal relationship with the "children-possessing" people and then point them to Jesus, the One Whom allowed these children to be in their lives.
- We have a SMALL HOME GROUP BIBLE STUDY MINISTRY to build a personal relationship with the "answer-searching" people and then pointing them to Jesus, the basis of all that we learn from.
- We have a SOUP MINISTRY with many of the ladies of the church family. They make delicious soups to always have on hand to distribute to the sick, the poor and the discouraged. One of the large soup companies once said the "Soup is Good Food". For the Camp Hill church family, *Soup is Good News Food of the Gospel*.
- We have INTERNET and TECHNOLOGIES MINISTRY that allows us to reach out to others all over the world, from Camp Hill to India. People can join us live for Sunday morning worship, Bible classes and even recorded lessons.
- We have a MILITARY MINISTRY that allows us to be able to spend TIME encouraging service men and women, including their friends and families.

Other possible Ministries

- We could have a SCRAP-BOOKING MINISTRY designed to allow us to invest some TIME in all those "photo-organizationally challenged" people and then re-directing them to Jesus, the One Whom wants us in His photo album.
- We could have a HOSPITAL or NURSING HOME MINISTRY to allow us to invest some TIME in all those "physically-ailing" and "time-challenged" people and then redirecting them to a personal relationship with Jesus, the Great Physician and the Eternal God.
- We could start a PRISON MINISTRY to invest some TIME in the "Freedom-lacking" people in order to direct them to a relationship with Jesus, the One Whom can set them free.

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- We could have a BIG BROTHER or BIG SISTER MINISTRY to help those that do not have a faithful father or mother. Together we could make a difference in a forgotten child that will lead him to the throne of God.

Our ministries are vehicles to allow the people around us to draw nearer to the kingdom of God. If the ministry does not lead people closer to Jesus, it is not a ministry, but a hobby.

We cannot think you are “wasting our time” for investing our TIME!

- Stop looking at it through your eyes, but through the eyes of the hurting.
- Stop looking at it through your eyes, but through the eyes of God.
- Our TIME is the greatest investment needed for the growth of the kingdom.

Time: A Waste or Investment.

Charles Francis Adams, 19th century political figure and diplomat, kept a diary. One day he entered: "Went fishing with my son today--a day wasted." His son, Brook Adams, also kept a diary, which is still in existence. On that same day, Brook Adams made this entry: "Went fishing with my father--the most wonderful day of my life!" The father thought he was wasting his time while fishing with his son, but his son saw it as an investment of time. The only way to tell the difference between wasting and investing is to know one's ultimate purpose in life and to judge accordingly.

- Don't underestimate your contribution of TIME in reference to the kingdom of God.
- You cannot make the difference for everyone, but you can make a difference for YOU and the PEOPLE into which you invest TIME in developing a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP.
- If you do, they are more likely to meet you best friend JESUS.

Challenge:

As you leave today, take good look at all the pictures of the saints on the board in back. If you do not have time to look at the board, then look at the directory at home. Look at each picture and fill in the blank...“I remember the time we _____”. Look at the picture and try to remember a memory that was built with that individual or family in the past. It might be a meal that you shared together or a trip that you took together. You might have a memory of that person calling and encouraging you at the time you needed it the most. You will find that there are many people on that board that you cannot refer to outside of the building. These are the people you need to make a commitment to build a memory ASAP.

- Invite them out to eat or into your home.
- Go to a Bible study in their home or invite them to yours.
- Work on a project together for the church.
- Go on a mission trip together with them.
- Participate in a ministry together.

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- Give them a call and let them know that you appreciate them and want to get to know them better.

If we as the church will invest TIME in everyone, then God will bless us in our relationship with Him. Look at the directory and find those that you yet need to make an investment of time; then do it.