

REDEEMING THE TIME

Making the Most of Every Opportunity

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how all of us spend our time. New social restrictions have certainly closed some doors for us, but they have also opened up new windows of opportunity. With this change in our weekly rhythms, we may find ourselves with different choices on how to best spend our days, nights and weekends. This group study will address some fresh opportunities for how we Christians can use our time these days, avoiding the frivolous and adopting the wise.

Be careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:15-16 NIV

Word Study: “*Redeeming the time for the days are evil.*” κJV (from Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, Blue Letter Bible)

- **redeem:** to buy back time; to regain possession of it; to buy up for one’s use; to rescue from loss; “to make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good” (cf. Colossians. 4:5)
- **time:** *kairos* refers to time in a qualitative sense, as in an opportune moment; “a propitious moment for decision or action” and “the right or appropriate time to say or do the right or appropriate thing”; (in contrast to *chronos* which refers to time in a quantitative sense—the sequential measurement of time)
- **evil:** full of labours, annoyances, hardships; bringing toils, perils; of a time full of peril to Christian faith and steadfastness; causing pain and trouble

Summary: In light of the nature of the world and the “evil” times we Christians live, this exhortation spurs us on to live wisely. It challenges us to “make the best use of the time” (ESV)—to seize every opportunity we can to remain steadfast in faith and to invest our time in that which is eternal.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How has your weekly schedule been affected in this season, and do you now have more or less discretionary time?
2. On the other side of this pandemic, in what ways might we look back in regret for opportunities squandered?

FOUR TIMELY OPPORTUNITIES Fill in the blanks below with some practical ways to invest your time wisely.

1. **TIME TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD**
 - **Meet:** schedule time to read your Bible and pray each day (see group assistance ideas below)
 - **Read:** choose a Christian book to read (share recommendations with each other)
 - **Listen:** Download a Christian audio book to listen to on your daily walks in the neighbourhood
2. **TIME TO ENJOY YOUR FAMILY**
 - **Spouse:** walk and talk more; exercise together; eat together; listen to a good book together...
 - **Children:** play boardgames; wrestle; make fun meals together; walk/exercise together...
 - **Extended family:** call or Zoom; ask how they’re *really* doing; send a care package, or money...
3. **TIME TO KNOW AND SERVE YOUR NEIGHBOURS**
 - **Connect:** initiate end of driveway conversations; ask about their kids and extended family...
 - **Serve:** bring a meal; help with yard work; wash their windows; don’t ask, just do it...
 - **Witness:** offer to pray for them; tell them you’re a Christian; ask what they believe; be happy...
4. **TIME TO GO DEEPER WITH YOUR GROUP MEMBERS**
 - **Weekly online meeting:** continue to faithfully meet with your group each week
 - **Group Chat:** choose a chat platform for your group and stay in touch throughout the week
 - **Phone calls:** make one call to (and receive one call from) one group member each week
 - **Accountability partners:** pair up for a month at a time and encourage one another weekly

THREE TIMELY CAUTIONS Discuss how the following areas can be time wasters, stealing time from wiser pursuits.

1. **NEWS** guard against constantly checking current events; intake healthy portions for your mind
2. **ENTERTAINMENT** self-manage the quantity and quality of TV, movies and streaming services
3. **SOCIAL MEDIA** resist the time-consuming rabbit hole of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr...

“Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord for you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15:58

LEADER’S GUIDE

The Big Idea:

Once in decades or even centuries, a regional or world-wide calamity strikes our world. These terrible circumstances present rare and timely opportunities for Christians to enter into the hardships that people face in order to comfort, serve, and show the love and hope offered by God through Christ. Now is the time for us to “spur one another on to love and good deeds”. This study is designed “for such a time as this”.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- email your group the Discussion Guide (and introductory video) and make sure that they print their own copy prior to the meeting
- get everyone involved: Read the Big Idea above; have your co-leader open with a topic-related prayer; assign others to read paragraphs and sub-points; encourage brainstorming applications
- Bible Study: simply read the verse and review the meanings of the three key words; but don’t forget the admonition to “be careful” and “be wise”
- Group Discussion questions 1 & 2 are designed to discover how each member is *personally* experiencing this season

FOUR TIMELY OPPORTUNITIES

Here’s where you will invite a brainstorming session on PRACTICAL ways we can wisely utilize our time in four areas. (Note that in this Leader’s Guide, suggestions have been added for your benefit so you can make additional suggestions to those offered by the group.)

1. **Time with God:** How can we capitalize on this less hectic pace of life in order to go deeper with God? Challenge those in your group to “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” James 4:8
2. **Time with family:** How can we use this time to love and enjoy our family? (Note: be sensitive to those who are unmarried or without children, and to those who may have recently lost one or both parents.)
3. **Time with neighbours:** How can we practically obey part two of the Great Commandment: “love your neighbour as yourself”? People are more open to the Gospel than usual: How can we open up spiritual conversations in this season?
4. **Time with each other:** See the Level Up Leaders video “Doing Life Together Throughout the Week” to find practical guidelines on how to set up one-on-one opportunities to go deeper between meetings. Implement one THIS week!

THREE TIMELY CAUTIONS

Here is where we need to lovingly admonish one another to not let our lives gravitate toward the temporary and trivial (and regret it later)

1. Use these added Leader’s Guide notes as a summation after everyone has shared ideas
2. A-muse means to not-think: there’s a time for relaxation but we should be careful not to indulge excessive time in “amusements”

SUMMARY:

Here are some final thoughts (which you could cut and paste into the chat bar if you wanted, and then email to your group later).

- “Opportune” is defined as “a time well-chosen or particularly favourable”. It implies rarity or scarcity of such opportunities, hence a “window of opportunity”. Let’s act NOW to take advantage of this open window
- TIME is our most precious commodity; let’s keep our eyes on the sand running through the hourglass to inspire us to live WISELY