

Frazzled Yet Faithful

Keeping Your Focus on God in the Midst of an Over-Busy Life

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One way believers demonstrate their faithfulness to God is by remaining consistent in personal spiritual disciplines like prayer and Bible study. These practices not only edify the believer, they also say to God, “I enjoy You and I want to spend time with You.”

I am a firm believer in the principle that self-discipline and sacrifice are necessary components of the faithful Christian life. I have frequently said that if one is unwilling to “create” time for personal Bible study and prayer, time will not volunteer itself. I also realize, however, that certain people’s lives are so filled with unavoidable activity that personal time for Bible study and prayer can be extremely difficult to find.



Think, for example, of Christian mothers who stay at home to care for their children. Women in this category labor tirelessly to nurture the drooling, diaper-messing gifts God has entrusted to them. Their faithfulness to this noble task often leaves them with little time or energy to restore their own souls through personal spiritual disciplines. In this same household, because many employers don’t pay enough for one full-time income to support a family, the father may be forced to work two jobs. This, of course, means 70-80 hours per week plus travel time.

Also consider the college student who is holding down a full-time job along with a full-time class schedule. Or imagine being a medical doctor who is not only called upon constantly by day, but is also *on-call* throughout the night. I have been told that 80-hour weeks are the norm in this profession, and 100+ is not unusual. And what about the man or woman who holds a salaried position from 9-5 (or as long as work demands), coupled with a 1-2 hour commute beginning in suburbia and ending with a crawl through downtown traffic?

Every Christian should create the time to study the Bible and pray, but people in situations like these simply have less time with which to work. There are only 168 hours in a week, and at least some of those (ideally at least 40-50) should be given to sleep. Many of the remaining hours are taken by vehicle maintenance, keeping the house and yard in order, and other necessary activities like eating, bathing, and paying the bills. So how can people who are unavoidably over-busy

edify themselves and show their devotion to God in the midst of their frazzling lives?

Here are a few suggestions:

- Combine your Bible reading with other essential activities, like eating breakfast. Keeping a Bible or other good Christian reading material in the bathroom also helps (remember, we’re getting creative here).
- Listen to the Bible CDs or MP3s while you are driving (you’ll find yourself thanking the Lord for traffic jams!), walking for exercise, mowing the lawn, gardening, washing the car, cleaning out the garage, cooking supper, or folding laundry.
- Use sticky notes or three-by-five cards to keep Scripture in front of you throughout your day, perhaps on your bathroom mirror, your desk at work, your bulletin board, or your computer monitor. Seek to memorize the passages you post, and put up new passages on a regular schedule to keep your interest fresh. Resolve to live according to what you memorize.
- Keep a small Bible in your pocket so that you can read while waiting in lines, at the doctor or dentist, or the motor vehicle department.
- Leave opened Bibles around your house, perhaps next to the microwave, on the coffee table, or beside your bed. This may prompt you to use even the smallest bits of free time for reading.
- Pray while you are driving (with your eyes open of course), in the shower, on the elevator going up to your office, while waiting for the train or bus, while you are on “hold” on the telephone, or while the little ones are napping.
- Post prayer lists in the same places where you post passages of Scripture. These may include specific requests, lists of God’s attributes, and examples of His goodness in your life.

Again, I would encourage everyone to be creative in the pursuit of time for devotion to God. It may be that the best thing you can do is to give up a few things that matter less than prayer or Bible reading (for example, the time you spend reading the newspaper or watching TV). But even if your time-making creativity cannot be improved upon be the most faithful Christian you can be, even though frazzled.

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