

Researching the Bible

My times are in Thy hand
Psalm 31, verse 15

Ralf Hinrichs,
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What is actually meant by 'time'? We are counting minutes, hours, days, yet it is difficult to understand 'time'. Albert Einstein once said, when asked to explain, "Time is, what you are reading on your watch".

One cannot grasp, but feel 'time'.

At times one can compare it to chewing gum, sticking to our fingers and stretching endlessly. 'Time' seems to go on, 'time' is flying, so that we ask ourselves at the end of the day, whether we have made good use of it. Generally however we would say: 'time' is without limits. Certainly 'time' is endless, but not for us!

Just imagine:

what would be your choice of action, if you had learned that only another 24 hours of your life were left?

How frightened you would be! So much still left to be done!

Whom should you start visiting for the last time?

How would you deal with that situation?

Would you be prepared to appear in front of God?

Many people would say: "Recently I found it increasingly difficult to offer time to God. Of course I have said my prayers and was active in the community. My intention has always been to concentrate on God, when the children would have left home, all bills were paid and when I myself would be too feeble to do any sport.

Yet to have to face God within 24 hours? How could I do it? There would not really be enough time to prepare myself."

Obviously we know that one day we will have to die. How do we use the time left up to that moment?

In Psalm 31, verse 15 it says: "My times are in Thy hand", which says more or less that birth and death belong together. Verse 15 expresses this idea of intimacy.

If we can address God in a personal 'You', we are in our 'time', whilst visualizing our lives in God's hand.

He means security! Warmth! What a powerful force!

How beautiful it would be, to perceive this joy throughout life and not to have to wait for such a discovery and such possibilities near our end, on the last remaining meters of the finishing straight, when the children have flown the nest and all bills are paid.

I am certain that all of us, occasionally or even at regular intervals, have known the feeling of closeness to and intimacy with God. Our lives, our 'times' are in His hand. This fact should give us joy or even enthusiasm. We are in His hand and God is watching over us. We cannot just take it for granted. If we want Him to look after us, we have to search for and come to Him.

He knows us inside out, but God wants us to tell Him, what we feel, think about and whether we want to experience His nearness.

Most of all and very important, we have to ask:
What does God expect us to do and how do we deal with our 'time'?

'Time' is limited; yet we waste it, give it away and forget about it.
Sometimes it is good and necessary to think about 'time'.

How do I use time? Am I happy about the way I am spending time? Is there a way, to be near God in my daily life, to let Him take part in it?

As God is called 'Father' and 'You', He is present, He can be addressed and we feel Him in our hearts. Thus He is with us daily and He becomes part of our life, as if being beside us.

Looking at it in that way, it is impossible, not to spend time with God. Neither can we stop welcoming him into our homes, our lives.

How do we organize our time? Surely a youngster would see it in a different way from a mature man in his later life.

When young, even a weekend seems to go on for ages, especially if the weather is bad.
Now, in my mature state, I am realizing the weekend has gone, before I even became aware of it.
Years are passing much quicker, weeks seem to get shorter and shorter, the older one is.

Yet 'time' is always the same. How terribly long does a poorly made film seem, or a boring lecture! Some people are taking the opportunity to go to sleep, or not turning up. It takes ages, if we are waiting for a medical result, or hoping for the return of a beloved person.

God's chosen people had to endure decades in the desert, until they were told about the road ahead;- half a human life one would consider it nowadays. I would think that we could win new insight into our feeling for 'time', by changing the ways of our lives.

To start with, we have to be aware that we live in the present. Everything, concerning the past,- oppressing though it might have been,- really should not be part of it.

If we succeed in stopping the impact of the past on our personal present lives, it will seem like 'freedom'. We are gaining time from the past for our lives and are using it for the present.

The same applies to the future. Neither is playing a part in the present.

If I am putting off obligations for too long and are getting worried about an uncertain future, if I know, I can only fulfill my desires in years to come, or I can only look forward to a coming happiness, then I am squandering every day upto that date.

When we are recognizing the danger, which past or future might have deprived us from or could deprive us from, then 'time' at present is worth its while. We should be looking afresh for more orientation of 'time' in our lives.

We already know that time is pulling our leg or that we get a runaround, that hours, days and weeks, may seem to be longer or shorter than we remember.

As Christians we have an opportunity to address God personally with any of our requests. In our prayer we can withdraw from the hectic of daily chores and remind ourselves of :why God has given us 'time'.

We may ask God , what to do with with our lives and what He might have planned for our everyday lives. We are not capable to find new orientation or the necessary sensitivity for 'time' singlehandedly. To gain it, we must put our trust in God.

We should not forget that God has our lives in His hand, not only in view of the end of our lives. He also watches over every second of the present.

Is is good to reflect about a moment of 'time' with God in peae and quiet and to to feel and share 'time' with Him, free of memories of the past and expectations for the future.

If we are able to forget 'time', we can be in God's hand and we will feel power and utter joy about our own lives.