

## HOME REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE: Family Priorities

Ephesians 5:6-16

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WATCH/LISTEN: <https://www.fbcic.org/sermon/family-priorities/>

Over the past several years, our pastoral team has had a growing concern about how time-starved our church families are. We hear that over and over again. In the past, we've all been asking God for things to slow down, for more time with family. I guess we should all be careful what we pray for!

You've heard of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. They move from foundational, physical, survival needs all the way up to self-esteem needs and self-actualization needs (fulfilling work, etc.). You'll notice why we are all feeling stress. We're trying to balance those basic needs for safety, health, food, shelter with the higher need for belonging, relationships, connection, etc.

***Our text is inviting us to clarify our values.*** Who and what are you living for? I once heard a psychologist speaking to a group. He said that stress comes into our lives because our behavior doesn't line up with what we say we value. Paul couches this section on life priorities in the language of the resurrection (v. 14). Wake up and live.

We have to get to our calendars first with the things that matter and not buy into all of culture's assumptions, letting it define what is urgent. Setting priorities is not a one-and-done. We constantly have to reset them. Situations change. We have to constantly adapt.

Mark and Lisa Scandrette suggest a weekly family meeting to review the family purpose agreement, and see well you're doing (*Belonging and Becoming*, pp. 20, 49ff).

***The text is also inviting us to receive the gift of each day.*** When he urges the Ephesians to redeem the time (v. 16), Paul is using the language of commerce (we would say the language of the stock market). He is saying buy up the time, corner the market on time. It denotes an intense focus. Time is a precious and priceless commodity.

In Thoreau's *Walden*, he says we make a mistake when we assume life is to be lived by only looking to some north star, far off and unreachable. Life is to be lived and celebrated, he says, in the "now and here." How many of us miss "the now and here" because we're so focused on a remote star? "Making the most of the time..."

I remember taking our grandson to the arcade, putting our tokens in so he could ride the pony, the rocket and race car. But he would no more than get on one ride and he was looking over his shoulder, thinking about what he was going to do next, never enjoying the moment. Do you know anyone like that? "Making the most of the time..."

In the final episode of the TV show, "The Office," the character Andy is waxing nostalgic about this very subject. He says, "I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them." Wow. What did Paul say? "Making the most of the time..."

Has something good come out of sheltering-in-place? Perhaps doing less has become attractive to us. Perhaps you've seen on Facebook this suggestion: Make a list of all the things in your life which won't change because of COVID-19. The love of family and friends. God's care and provision. Forgiveness. Salvation. Do you hear God whispering? "Make the most of the time..."