

LIVING *Life2Life*

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“Why does it take so long?” Time crawls when we wait for a friend’s salvation or for someone to grow as a disciple. We look for time-saving methods and programs to speed up growth. It’s easy to become frustrated if change doesn’t happen according to schedule. Could we have a mistaken view of time?

The New Testament uses two primary words for the Hebrew concept of time, *chronos* and *kairos*. Chronos time is chronological time. It refers to quantity of time or the amount of time passed (Matthew 25:19). Kairos time is about the “right” moment (Mark 1:15). In teaching, we talk about the “teachable moment,” the time when we’re open to learn. This is kairos time.

Here’s a kairos time example. Dan told me how a friend had moved from an atheist to an agnostic to a genuine seeker. “Do you know what he showed me the other day?” said Dan, “He showed me his ‘proof book.’” Dan’s friend is journaling how God is “proving” Himself in his daily experience.

“This is a divine moment!” I told Dan. Was this time predictable? Was it plotted on a calendar? No, it can only be seized in this moment. This is kairos time, the unpredictable moment when the Holy Spirit intersects with life. God’s timetable may not always be our timetable.

Time for the Hebrews was not only in kairos moments but it was also measured by the rhythms of life. Instead of points on a timeline, the Bible pictures time as a series of constant rhythms:

seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter . . . (Genesis 8:22).

The New Testament pictures spiritual growth as seasonal rhythms. There’s a time to sow and water, plant and harvest (John 4:35-38; 1 Corinthians 3:6-8). For the Jewish mind, life was wrapped up in these rhythms, rhythms which portray life as a journey rather than a timeline.

When we live life2life with people, we must learn to think in kairos time, spotting the teachable moments, observing the rhythms of the Holy Spirit. We can only do this as we get close enough to people to discern how the Holy Spirit is shaping one’s life story.

When we think in a Hebrew way about time, we learn to:

- spot the teachable moments in people’s lives. These moments may not be the result of my ministry timetable.
- pray for wisdom. The time for a penetrating question, an appropriate verse, or a hug are not scheduled like appointments in a Blackberry.
- hope for a future. If life is like a journey with rhythms of stopping and starting, the final chapter in someone’s life is not written yet.

As you live life2life with people this week, ask God to help you spot a kairos moment in a conversation. Be alert to the rhythms of the Holy Spirit in a friend’s life. This sensitivity to God’s view of time allows us to join in His timetable.

