

Study Guide for the Central Church of Christ

March 3, 2019

To Adult Teachers:

March 3, we will study Numbers 28-29. Discussion questions are:

1. What are some of the challenges you face in managing your time? What are some of the big “time wasters” you struggle with?
2. Up to now, have you regarded time management as more as a practical issue or a spiritual issue? What happens when we fail to see the spiritual dimensions of time management?
3. Scan through Numbers 28:1-8. What were the significant instructions regarding the daily offerings? Although we are no longer under the sacrificial system, what can we learn about organizing our days from these instructions?
4. Read Numbers 28:9-10. How was the Sabbath offering similar to the daily offerings? How was it different? Scan through Numbers 28:11-15. How was the monthly offering similar to the daily offerings? How was it different?
5. These regular offerings took the form of sacrifices. What regular offerings are we taught to make in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2? How does this offering help keep our spiritual world “in order”?
6. Scan Numbers 28:16-29:40. What five annual observances do you find there? With which of these are you most familiar? With which are you least familiar? What were the purposes of these festivals? (Note to teachers: prior to class you may want to do a little research about the purpose and timing of these festivals either in a Bible dictionary or an online Bible study site.)
7. How many of the annual celebrations appear to be one-day observances and how many are observed over multiple days?
8. What kinds of observances or activities give structure to the yearly rhythm of our lives? How could we incorporate worship more fully into these occasions?
9. What spiritual practices/disciplines do you practice on a regular basis? How would you like to grow in this area? How could group members pray for you as you seek to grow in your practice of spiritual disciplines?

Sermon: *The Rhythm of Life*

Numbers 28-29

Before I met Niki, my closet was full. I would try to get more things in it, but I couldn't. I would cram one thing in and three others would spill out. It was a marvel of disorganization. Winter clothes thrown in with shorts and t-shirts. At least three pairs of shoes that I never wore. Lots of clothes that I couldn't wear. Other clothes that I could wear, but never did because they were buried in the pile and I'd forgotten I even owned them.

There was a kind of organizational structure to my closet—shelves, bars, hangars, tie rack, shoe caddy—but most of it was buried under the amorphous pile of “stuff.” I never cleaned out or organized my closet; I just keep putting more stuff in. Until it became full. I couldn’t get anything else in.

Niki is a super organized person. She suggested that I would be well served to recognize the basic structure there and organize things accordingly. Put things where they belong instead of just cramming them into any available space. Get rid of things that no longer serve a purpose.

1. My message today is not about my closet. It’s about time and how we view it and use it. Many of us treat time like I treat my closet. We just keep stuffing more things in until it’s so full we don’t have room for anything else. When some demand on our time comes along, we just put it anywhere there’s space available without asking if that’s where it belongs. Truth is, there is a certain structure to time. We used to be much more attuned to it. What’s changed?
 - a. Switch from agricultural to industrial economy
 - b. Technology (light bulb, TV, online)
 - c. Globalization
 - d. Consumerism and convenience (24/7)
 - e. Result: frantic, chaotic lives, sleep disturbances, stress, depression and anxiety.
2. What we need is to go back to the basic structure of time and organize our lives around that structure. It goes back to the very first page of the Bible. Genesis 1:14-16, 2:2-3. There is a created structure to time.
 - a. Sun (years and seasons)
 - b. Moon (months)
 - c. Sun and moon (day and night)
 - d. God’s own work/rest cycle (weeks)
3. Now, turn to Numbers 28-29. You find an organization of time built around that structure.
 - a. Daily offerings (morning and evening)
 - b. Weekly offerings (Sabbath day)
 - c. Monthly offerings (new moons)
 - d. Yearly festivals (Springtime and Harvest)
 - e. Two observations I would make from this:
 - (1) We function best when our lives are organized around the created structure of time.
 - (2) The markers of time take the form of offerings to God (worship). Our lives are to be worship to God.
4. What does this mean in practical terms? Observe the created rhythms of time:
 - a. Daily (with shift work, this is tough for some, but still need to work on a rhythm)
 - (1) Recognize that there is to be a time of productive activity, then a time of slowing down and rest. When we take on too much, we start shifting “work” to the time of rest (evening). “There is enough time in each day to accomplish God’s will.” When you start shifting tasks to the time of day that should be for slowing down and resting—“I can do the shopping at 2 a.m.”—you disturb the rhythm. Disturb the sleep cycle. Get to where even when you’re dead tired, you can’t sleep.
 - (2) Morning and evening offerings:
 - (a) In morning, offer the day to God. Ask him to reveal his will to you for that day. Whatever opportunities come up to serve Him, be open to them, Minister to the needs of others.

- (b) In evening, review the day. Evaluate how it went through God's eyes. Lay it before him; ask his forgiveness for what you did wrong; give him thanks for what went well.
- b. Weekly.
- (1) Observe a Sabbath. Take a day for rest, relaxation, reflection, and recharging. Some groups have been quite serious about this: Cheryl and I on our honeymoon (restaurant and car wash). Drier vents in Dutch Reformed areas. What we do by shifting work into the evening hours, we also do by shifting work to the Sabbath. All the things we didn't have time to do during the week, we'll do them Sunday. Electronic Sabbath?
 - (2) Start each week gathering with fellow believers. "First day of the week" is a phrase that seems to have taken on a special meaning among the first Christians. It was resurrection day; it was also gathering day. A comment about soccer, basketball and other activities.
 - (3) The importance of making a weekly offering. We're a little embarrassed about this being part of our public worship. "Separate and apart from the Lord's supper, and as a matter of convenience at this time..." But we have an instruction regarding a weekly offering. 1 Corinthians 16:2. Why important? It is a witness to your financial priorities and to the commitment of all your financial dealings to God. "The first use of my money each week will be to make an offering to my God."
- c. Other regular activities: home groups, e.g.
- d. Yearly/seasonal
- (1) Giving times to God: Kids Camp, Mission Trips.
 - (2) Observing church calendar. Not familiar in our heritage, but has some value. Spring (Lent) time for life inventory, reacquainting self with fact that we need God more than any of our "stuff." In dead of winter, time to remember and celebrate the sending of God's greatest gift to earth.

I needed to reorganize my closet. You can't keep on stuffing things in there. You may need to reorganize your time. You can't keep stuffing more things in. And as believers, we have an organizing principle.