

THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE!

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Eating a chocolate-chip croissant and sipping hot tea I sit, absorbing the pleasure of a new day into my soul. While I eat I think about the third chapter of Ecclesiastes.

There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven--

A time to give birth, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot what is planted.

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build up.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

A time to throw stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to shun embracing.

A time to search, and a time to give up as lost; a time to keep, and a time to throw away.

A time to tear apart, and a time to sew together; a time to be silent, and a time to speak.

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

(NAS)

That starts me thinking, what *are* the times of my life right now? And I make a list.

It is a time to:

- **Take risks** (We are immersed in running our own business, you know, that part where it's going somewhere but not making any money)
- **Savor the small pleasures** (Things are tight right now as we focus on the business and our ministry, it makes the small things count)

- ***Enjoy my parents*** (My parents have needed help getting past some major physical difficulties)
- ***Watch our children grow and learn to fly, and while being supportive, not rescuing or enabling them*** (We're enjoying the empty nest, but it's hard on these parent's hearts to walk through that period of them finding their sea legs)
- ***Have time for extras before the whirlwind hits*** (Soon things will take off and we'll be up to our necks in business, so I want to appreciate this time to write and work on other things)
- ***Dream and live dreams*** (It's not easy to get off the treadmill of societal culture and do something different, it takes a lot of prayer, laughter, and guts)
- ***Believe in ourselves and our purposes*** (we're currently operating four different aspects of our ministry, and while it is satisfying to be doing what we're passionate about, it also takes a lot of hard work and sacrifice)

Not exactly King Solomon, but it has helped me to refocus my perspective.

Solomon's list in Ecclesiastes is all-inclusive, but how would you define some of the seasons that you're living in right now? A "season" can be any period of time from a minute to a thousand years (and not just for God, we also have days that last that long).

I have a close friend who is going through a very hard time, as overnight she has become a single mother raising three children. Her current season started a week ago, when things began to fall apart. She didn't choose it, but it descended on her before she could brace herself for it. Yet, the sun is beginning to peek over the horizon, and in the black soil of her life tiny green sprouts of hope are beginning to push through the dirt.

When I started writing this earlier it was dark, but at this point the sun is up and I see some blue sky through the cracks in the clouds. I'm not normally up before daylight as that's one advantage of working for ourselves, we get to set our hours.

But at 6:40 this morning I got a text message from this hurting friend that read, "Remind me to tell u about my bridegroom moment last night." Surely, if you've read any of this website, you'll realize that, translated, that means "Jesus came personally and touched me with His love." Yesterday her marriage crashed and burned, today she has a "bridegroom moment" to tell me. How awesome is that?

She could just leave her list of "A Time To's" with "A time to uproot what is planted, a time to want to kill some other people, and a time of pitch black darkness where my soul has been crushed." And that list would be true, but her list wouldn't stop with that. It would also include "a time to appreciate loving and supportive family and friends, a time to love my children, a time to rebuild my life into something beautiful, and a time to cling to my Bridegroom Lover."

So, here's your homework this week. Find somewhere peaceful and quiet (I know, almost impossible for many of you, especially if your children are young), sit down with a pen and paper (notebooks are wonderful things in which to keep scraps of life), and think about which part of the first eight verses of Ecclesiastes 3 you are currently living. Where are you in the journey? Does it seem all dark, lonely, and hard? Be honest with the reality, but also take time to look for the good. How can you word your "Time tos" to be more positive?

A huge way to change your perspective and help you find the good is this: consider what pleasures you can insert into your days. I've learned to get great pleasure out of very small things, like the window over my desk that shows the sky and treetops. For some reason I love seeing whether the wind is moving the treetops or if the day is still. It doesn't determine a good or bad day, it's just a tiny measure of beauty and life outside my window. Yesterday, with the effects of Hurricane Ike passing through, the treetops were doing a mad dance across the sky, and yet, this morning I have to watch for a moment before I can see them moving.

Because Terry and I are conserving gas and money, our current haunt (no pun intended, but it was quite clever in hindsight) has been to walk in the cemetery. We go in the evening when the day is cooling down, and enjoy talking and getting

exercise (no, we aren't those who are hard-paced walkers, we amble, but it still counts as exercise.) Occasionally we will meet our friends there, set up lawn chairs, and enjoy visiting.

I get pleasure just looking at my "treasures" that sit on my desk. My little chest of glass drawers from Elizabeth, my mug that says "I ought to be writing," and the spiritual-realm map Jenn made me. There are Trinidad dollar bills with flamingos on them from my sister, the card from Terry that says, "A small dwelling in the wild meadow will be enough if you are there with me."

Whatever your list of "A Time To" looks like, attitude makes all the difference in the world. And, if my hurting friend can find time in her bleeding life to have a "bridegroom moment" then it's possible in any circumstance. But hey, wait until after 8:00 AM to tell me, okay?