

Our hours

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February 25, 2016

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One of the few fairnesses of life is the fact that each of us is given an equal 168 hours per week. That is where equality in so many ways ends. From that point on our privileges or lack thereof, and the resources they bring, define what we can do with that time.

Yet it is those 168 hours that somehow baffle us all. I know of few people who feel they have enough time to do everything they need to get done, let alone do anything they want to do. It does not matter how many modern conveniences we have, we will just never have enough time.

Our spiritual life often suffers. Instead of being our basic foundation, spiritual practices somehow become luxuries that we squeeze in when we can. Church is great, but we have to fix the roof Sunday morning. Maybe next week. Prayer would be wonderful, but who has the time to sit around with their eyes closed and talk to God? It would be interesting to read the Bible one day, but these financial reports from work have to be read first.

I get all of this. Pastors are not immune and, despite literally being surrounded by church all day, I have often caught myself feeling disconnected from my spiritual life. I have also noticed, though, how spiritual disconnection is unsustainable. At least for me.

Jesus spoke about a fig tree that would not bear fruit. When the landowner wanted to cut it down, the gardener bartered with him for just one more year. *I'll give it*

*good fertilizer, and dig a trench around it, he says, and if that doesn't work, then you can cut it down.*

So often we look around to find that we are no longer bearing spiritual fruit. It is in those moments that we can become our own gardeners, cultivating the space and the good soil needed to once again grow in abundance.

This isn't easy, though. It takes a shifting of priorities and the deliberate reapportionment of some of our 168 hours. But one lesson that focusing on spiritual growth has taught me is this: no matter what other demands are made of us, we make time for what really matters to us in life. In the end, the way we use our time tells us what we really worship.