

Anchor Point

REFRESHING
YOUR SOUL
IN A
BUSY WORLD



Refreshing your soul in a busy world

Topic:	Finding rest in a busy world.
Main Point:	Setting regular time aside to pray and be alone with God is key in maintaining a healthy spiritual walk in an overly busy world.
Intended Response:	Find a distraction free place to pray and be alone with God
Key Verse:	Mark 1:35 <i>"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place."</i>
Mission Intention:	Making Disciples, Transforming Lives.

Introduction:

- The challenges of an over busy life

A. Jesus modelled two things that will help us overcome busyness

- Jesus spent time alone with God
- Jesus spent time in prayer

Point Two: Setting regular time aside to pray and be alone with God is key in maintaining a healthy spiritual walk in an over busy life

B. Jesus placed value on setting time aside to be with God

- Jesus encouraged his disciples to find a quiet place (Mk 6:31-32)
- We all need time out from busyness

Point Three: Set yourself a goal of finding a distraction free place this week, where you can spend time with God alone

C. Jesus modelled a life that was stilled by the power of prayer

- Jesus never outgrew prayer
- Jesus encouraged praying in a distraction free zone

Point Three: Prayer is powerful when it is combined with alone time with God.

Teaching Illustration: In point two, we refer to regular spiritual devotions as 'an anchor point' for our souls. To reinforcement this illustration, you may consider setting up life jackets, rope, a boat anchor (you can make one out of cardboard).

Power Point slides accompany this sermon

- Resources are available at <http://www.sarmy.org.au/en/Resources/Sermons>

Refreshing your soul in a busy world

Introduction:

Good morning all,

Many of us are faced with the challenge of a busy life. How many of us here today find ourselves asking the question 'how am I meant to get it all done?' or 'how am I meant to fit this all in?' How many of us feel overwhelmed at times?

Life is busy, and it seems to be getting busier and busier. The Bible directs all of us to:

"Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people" (Eph 6:7)...

... we are encouraged to work in a way that would bring honour to God, but left unchecked, this desire to please the Lord can lead to overworking and an unhealthy lifestyle.

Pastorally, I see this playing in out in people's lives as '*more work and less boundaries*'. For many people, the stress of "if I don't get all this done..." turns into anxiety, pressure, and often times leads to overworking.

We find ourselves working extra hard to be reliable, have a good reputation, perhaps for reward or recognition, but often this can have adverse effects. We find ourselves:

- Over-tired (maybe with headaches, sore eyes...),
- Having less time for family, friends, others, or ourselves,
- Eating convenient but unhealthy meals, or
- Find ourselves with less and less energy.

(Insert an analogy that is suited to your context) My wife and I call this our second HECS debt: which stands for Half-Eaten-Carcass-Syndrome – it's when you come in home from work dragging yourself around the house just looking for the remote control and a block of chocolate – not healthy!

The danger of constant busyness is that we can find ourselves growing more and more spiritually tired; and when we are tired spiritually, human nature has a tendency to drift away from God.

How many of us have found ourselves from skipping church to sleep in on a Sunday morning? Or have found that our devotional time with God has stopped?

Because of busyness we can sometimes we stop reading the Bible regularly, stop praying, journaling, worshipping, stop practising our preferred spiritual discipline.

Busyness is a real tension point for many of us. It wears on our souls. It drains us. It stops us from being our best selves. If we are not careful, we will work so hard to get it all done that we will get undone in the process.

Transition	So what do we do when busyness is getting the better of us? How do we slow down long enough to remain connected with God? And how do we get God's help in all of this? Well, in all things we look to Jesus, so let's open our Bibles to Mark 1:35...
Key Scripture (Mk 1:35)	<i>Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed</i>
1. Jesus modelled two things that will help us overcome busyness	<p>Jesus led a very full life. He had a lot to accomplish. Think about it. Jesus came to take away the sins of the entire world so all people could have opportunity to be reconciled to God. He was a teacher, healer, prophet, a King, the Messiah, the hope of the world – he had a lot on his plate, yet he managed to get it all done while still remaining close to God and training the twelve disciples to carry on his work.</p> <p>Jesus didn't let the busyness of his world crowd out his relationship with God. He didn't get overworked to the point of burnout. He managed to maintain a close relationship with God despite all he had to get done. <i>How did He do that?</i></p> <p>After a busy day of teaching, healing, deliverance, and preaching, Mark 1:35 records:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed</i> (Mk 1:35).</p> <p>In the midst of the demands of ministry, healing, preaching, serving, and working hard for God Jesus remain connected with God by refreshing himself with solitude and prayer.</p> <p>In a very busy and demanding world, Jesus took regular time out from all the demands placed on his life to be alone with God and to pray.</p>
Point 1:	Setting regular time aside to pray and be alone with God is a key to maintaining a healthy spiritual walk in an over busy life.
Transition	We all can benefit from practising these same two spiritual disciplines...
2. Jesus placed value on setting time aside to be with God.	<p>Jesus modelled distraction free time with God:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place ..." (Mk 1:35).</i></p> <p>He had a place where he could go and rest in God. In Scripture, the 'solitary place' is also translated as <i>desert</i> and <i>wilderness</i>. It was an unpopulated place, generally free from other people and distractions. And Jesus also invited his disciples to do the same:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>"Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves (Mark 6:31-32).</i></p>

	<p>We all need times of solitude, times when we get away from distractions and busyness and take time to rest in God's presence. We all need time out from busyness, time when we get away from emails, Facebook, the web, laptops and even ... hold your breath ... our mobile phones.</p> <p>A small practical step we can all take is to find a regular place where you like to go and connect with God. You don't need to be there for a long time. It might only be 10 minutes, just long enough to enjoy a cup of tea, the point is it's time out from a busy world.</p> <p><i>(Insert your context) My place is my kitchen table, early in the morning or late at night while the kids are in bed. It's one of my favourite places. It's close to the fireplace, so I often put a few logs on there for ambiance and just enjoy time with God.</i></p> <p>When was the last time you had time alone with God? Do you have a spot where you could go where you can be distraction free?</p>
Point 2:	Set yourself a goal of finding a distraction free place this week, where you can spend time with God alone.
3. Jesus modelled a life that was stilled by the power prayer	<p><i>Jesus modelled a life that was stilled by the power of prayer ...</i></p> <p><i>"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mk 1:35).</i></p> <p><i>I find it fascinating that throughout his entire ministry and life, Jesus never stopped setting time aside for God and prayer...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When He needed to make a crucial decision (like choosing 12 disciples), He got time alone to pray: <i>"One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray and he prayed to God all night" (Luke 6:12).</i> • When He was dealing with a confronting situation (the death of John), He got time alone and to be with God: <i>"As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone" (Matt 14:13).</i> • When He was dealing with stress (the night of his betrayal), He got time alone and prayed: <i>"Then Jesus went with them to a garden called Gethsemane and told his disciples, "Stay here while I go over there and pray" (Matt 26:36).</i> <p><i>When it came to prayer, Jesus encouraged praying in a distraction free zone</i></p> <p><i>"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace" (Matt 6:6).</i></p>

	<p>When we get time alone with God, our prayer life can take on new dimensions. We can be more open in private. We can be more transparent with God.</p> <p>In 1 Peter 5:7, it says: <i>“Cast all your cares on Him, for He cares for you”</i>. The word ‘care’ refers to worry or anxiety. We are invited to share the things that weigh us down or stress us out with God in prayer.</p> <p><i>(Theme) I like to think of solitude and prayer as an anchor for our soul. When we practise these two spiritual disciplines together, they help still our souls in the midst of a busy world and connect with God.</i></p> <p><i>They help us to centre our thoughts on God and have a way of holding us long enough in the one spot to enjoy God’s presence to get refreshed and recharged. Practised together, they help us swap busyness for stillness.</i></p> <p>When you carve time out to be alone with God this week, let me encourage you to spend that time in prayer, asking God to help slow down your busy world. Ask God to help carry the anxieties or stressful situations you might be facing. Pray and ask God to refresh your soul.</p>
Point 3:	Prayer is powerful when it is combined with alone time with God.
Transition	As we close the message today, I am reminded of a quote by...
Conclusion	<p>...Martin Luther, who is recorded to have said, “I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayers.” James 5:16 says, <i>“The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”</i></p> <p>Now, I’m not saying we need to spend three hours in prayer, but the point is <i>time is not lost in prayer, it is gained.</i></p> <p>The reality is, when you or I pray, God hears our prayers and helps us. He has the power to help us de-stress in a busy world. As our Good Shepherd, he will lead us beside still waters.</p>
Call to Action	<p>So can I encourage you to find your spot, that place where you can be alone with God, and while you are there, pray to Him. God loves His children and delights in helping and blessing us.</p> <p>Take time this week to meet with God. 10 mins over a cuppa each morning or night will do wonders for your soul.</p> <p>Let’s prayer together...</p>
Closing Prayer	<p>Father, we thank you that you are near us. We thank you that you have a place for us and that you can and will meet us anywhere. We open our hearts to you today and ask that by your grace and might, you would help us find a place where we can still ourselves, and retreat from the busyness of our lives to simply be with you. We ask this, in Jesus’ name – Amen.</p>

Eph 6:7 (NIV)

Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

Mark 1:35 (NIV)

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Luke 6:12 (NLT)

One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night.

Matt 14:13 (NLT)

As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone.

Luke 9:28 (ESV)

Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

Matt 26:36 (MSG)

Then Jesus went with them to a garden called Gethsemane and told his disciples, "Stay here while I go over there and pray."

Matt 6:6 (MSG)

Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

Mark 6:31-32 (NKJV)

And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

James 5:16 (NLT)

"The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."