

Personal Administration

1. The Topic:

Organising ourselves, especially our time, in order to live a joyful, balanced, efficient and successful life.

That means:

- * Work and all other normal parts of a fulfilled life
incl. moderate amount of leisure, social life & exercise
- * Work done with maximum personal satisfaction
- * Work done efficiently
- * Work/tasks completed

2. Relevance/significance:

Most of us struggle often (every day!) in this area. Some may be at the point of not having any desire to make changes in this area -- nothing we've done has ever helped or worked. So for personal reasons, we may have felt-needs in this area.

Those in Christian work often work on their own without a person guiding or directing them step by step, telling them how they are to use each moment.

Hence the ability to organise oneself is for us a very fundamental issue so that our lives will be productive with integration of all the parts, rather than just lived from day to day plodding along -- somehow, somewhere.

Personal experience -- something not taught in training schools but in reality, an area that I've had to come to terms with for my own sense of inner well-being.

3. Background factors:

Our different temperaments, personalities & national/cultural backgrounds cause us to have a different appreciation of time and value of time; also what we consider priorities in how we use our time.

4. Our approach:

- a) Divide into groups of 3-4.
- b) Brainstorm together on "real-life struggles or obstacles you face in being organised & efficient people".

Examples:

- interruptions & distractions
- unclear admin. procedures (to whom responsible, what to do)
- overplanning, too high expectations of self
- no planning, doing only what one feels like doing or whatever comes to mind first
- too detailed/thorough
- perfectionistic
- addictions (eg. reading, TV, movies, games)
- laziness, anyhow is good enough
- time-wasting habits, eg. over-socializing
- poor attitudes: not really interested in the work
- poor relationships: don't like the people I'm working with
- fears: rejection if say "no", not able to do the work, not able to finish the work, starting but not finishing
- unable to decide what to do, what to do first
- no clear aim or goals
- poor leadership (too high expectations, no directions, sudden unexplained changes
- no honest evaluation or time for evaluating one's performance

Guidelines: One person writing down succinct pts; NO discussion; & spend no more than 4-5 mins.

- c) Choose together ONE of these problem areas or obstacles (i.e. the one that most wrestle with quite frequently), then discuss together practical steps to take to overcome this obstacle or solve this problem. (About 10-15 mins)

d) Share with the whole group plus discussion & interaction.

N.B. Have them also report the various problem areas.

e) Some practical guidelines.

4. Practical Suggestions:

a) Follow some simple steps in personal time management:

Step 1 PLAN

Plan to plan! Set time aside to plan at beginning of the week and at the beginning of each day.

Step 2 PRAY

Pray for clear guidance from God's Spirit.

Be open to a rebuke from the Spirit or His strong prompting to put off some burden that you have taken upon yourself that is NOT the work that God wants you to do.

Confess that you may have taken work on yourself without asking Him first.

Step 3 REVIEW

Review last week's or yesterday's uncompleted tasks and note which ones you need to tackle first.

Consider what obstacles arose or you allowed to come in that prevented you from completing the task.

Review often your life's higher priorities: Relationship with God, with ourselves (mental & emotional health), with our family, with God's people (i.e. team members), with the world around us.

Remember our need to live BALANCED lives.

Step 4 RECORD TASKS

Write down all the tasks you want to do and need to do (i.e. that you've been asked to do).

It's helpful to keep a small notebook with you wherever you go/are and to write down tasks as you remember them; even during QTs.

Look over the list and ask: "Which ones, if any, of these tasks are really NOT my responsibility?"

Step 5 PRIORITISE

Prioritise the list using some simple code TP - HP - LP, and then number the TPs in the order you believe they need to be done.

N.B. Don't just look at the URGENT tasks. Other less urgent tasks probably are more important, eg. writing a prayer letter.

Step 6 SCHEDULE

Schedule your time to do these tasks starting with the TP matters:

- * Work with larger blocks of time
- * Plan best times for "think" work & "busy" work
- * Fit in breaks & changes of pace
- * Approximate how much time a task will need need
- * Schedule the "harder" tasks first (you don't like to do!)
- * Don't schedule to the last minute or hour
- * If something else comes up (outside of your control), then don't react. Allow our sovereign God

to overrule your plan. Be always open to people rather than concerned just to do your own work.

- * Pay attention to deadlines.

Step 7 TAKE ACTION STEPS

Break each task down into simple action steps you can/should take. Then begin work. Time taken for all this planning is time well spent.

Don't procrastinate!

b) Invest in a good diary system.

This is not money wasted.

c) Spend time occasionally (half a day/whole day) to examine your life ("The unexamined life is not worth living"), to go back over your life's goals, to seek for God's help in areas where you have been falling behind or living disobediently, and then set renewed, fresh goals.

Make notes during such prayer retreats.

d) Try to DOUBLE the use of your time.

eg. Take books/magazines/letters with you to read when you have another task to do where you may have time to spare; listen to message cassettes when you don't have to concentrate/think (eg. washing the dishes).