

The Quiet Hour

TRAVEL TIPS (3) USE A TIME TABLE

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-These days the need for Holiday specials is almost over. Even so, the main line trains are still crowded. The mail trains continue to be popular, and also the specials run from one side of the country to the other. Some find the long-distance bus services more convenient for travel, so either early in the morning or late at night the bus depots are busy centres. One thing is clear. People know the times that buses or trains are scheduled to leave. In other words they find Time Tables come in useful.

God has a Time Table. It includes main-line events and also mentions branch lines and individual shuttles. God's Time Table includes the large events of history and the almost insignificant events of each individual's life.

We have our own Time Tables, too, especially arranged for us by ourselves, even if we have un-time-table-like natures. Let us take two sorts of people :—

Miss A : 6.00—6.45 Rise, bathe, do washing
6.45—7.00 Devotions
7.00—7.30 Breakfast
7.50— Off to duty
8.00—16.30 Duty
17.00—18.00 Rest, bathe, change etc. etc.

Miss B : No fixed time : Rise, bathe
approx. 7.45 Breakfast
approx. 8.05 off to duty
8.00—16.30 Duty
etc. etc.

Two somewhat extreme cases; of course, but Miss A can be relied upon to be reliable, whereas Miss B can be relied upon to be unreliable. They both arrange their day in their own way to suit themselves, the one being time-conscious the other being regularly unpredictable. Most of us are probably somewhere between the two extremes, mainly conscious of time but not exactly like clockwork in our precision. The important question is : How far does our personal Time Table fit in with God's Time Table ? It is only sensible to get the Main Lines fixed first and then to arrange the 'feeder services' accordingly.

In our daily devotions and our weekly and seasonal times of worship we endeavour to refresh our souls by awareness of the great main line principles which stem from God's own nature, His creative power and grace. Then, bearing these prime facts in mind, we have to arrange our Time Table for personal life and daily action.

After a time of prayer, perhaps using the prayers below, ask yourself :

1. Do I need to be more careful about my personal Time Table ?
2. Does my Time Table include :

Daily scripture reading ;

Daily prayer ;

Prayers for those I work with ;

Prayers for others' needs ;

Sparing time to help others ;

Writing letters to my parents or children ;

Reading good books ;

Continuing study ; Relaxing hobbies.

Then name four or five changes that need to be made in your personal Time Table :

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PRAYERS

Almighty and Eternal God,

As we think of the complexity of creation, and the immeasurable distances of this universe, we must need worship Thee, The God of power.

As we see the beauty of sunset and flower, the panorama of hills and land or sea and sand, we worship Thee, whose beauty is in holiness.

As we experience the gentleness of friendly or family care, and the happiness of contributing something good to the life of someone else, we worship Thee from whom we learn what graciousness and care really are.

Forgive us for our selfishness in all its forms, Our neglect of the best qualities in life, Our disregard of thy principles, Our obsession with what seems profitable only for ourselves.

Forgive us for ways in which we have demonstrated a complete lack of regard for the welfare of others.

Forgive us for our dullness of spirit and our lack of readiness to amend our ways.

Create in my heart, O God, a growing consciousness of Thyself. Reveal to my mind, O God, the truth which satisfies. Direct my tongue, O God, that I may edify or help another through my words and refrain from that which hurts.

Look through my eyes, O God, and help me to share Thy view of all that goes on around me. Check my thoughts, O God, so that only the wholesome shall be fruitful. Let my hands and strength be linked to Thy work and Will. When I sleep, keep Thou a watch about me. When I am ill and forced to rest myself, then help me to be confident in Thy ministry to soul and body.