

BUILD IN BREATHING ROOM

Sermon by Todd Lester

April 10, 2016

Icebreaker/Introduction

The "Building a Better Schedule" activity asks participants to think about their day and their schedules. Ask them to take a few minutes to reflect on their typical day (recognizing that each day is different, that we go through different seasons in life, or even that activities have cycles). After an appropriate amount of time, ask them what they may have noticed or learned when they took time to look at their schedules/lives. Are there certain times of the day that lend themselves to creating margin? You may want to discuss how schedules do change depending on your age or family situation (eg. young family with children vs. empty-nesters vs. retired couple)

Ask if there was anything from this week's message that stood out – either a point that was made which really resonated with them, or perhaps a question or difficulty that came up for them.

Have you tried to build margin in your life? How did it go?

Discuss Todd's statement that when we get overloaded then we go into survival mode. Can you give an example of when you may have experienced this?

Recall the Benefits of Margin: Peace of mind, Better physical health, Stronger relationships, More available to God

Would you agree with these benefits? Are there others? Does one of these resonate more with you (ie. is there one that you like to have the most?)

STEPS TO BUILDING BREATHING ROOM IN YOUR LIFE

1. ACCEPT MY HUMAN LIMITATION

Focuses on Psalm 103:14, Job 14:5

Can you agree that it is good that we are made with limitations? How easy is it for you to accept yours?

Recall the kinds of limitations: Physical, Emotional, Mental, Time Which of these limitations does your job push against the most? (that is, is your job physically, emotional, or mentally demanding? Or are there lots of time pressures?)

How in tune with your limitations are you? Do you recognize warning signs when you're reaching your limit (Todd mentioned fatigue, stress, irritability, loss of joy, pain)? What are personal warning signs for you?

Todd talked about the number of people you can 'carry emotionally.' Do we always have a choice in that? (example, family members undergoing a health crisis) How can we 'carry' someone emotionally?

2. EXPECT TO HAVE PROBLEMS

Focuses on John 16:33, Proverbs 22:3

Todd pointed out that Jesus said we would have many trials and sorrows. So why do we still tend to be very surprised when they come? How would our life look differently if we lived it expecting problems? Are there things we can do to prepare ourselves for the inevitable problems to come?

Consider personality types – are people who tend to be worriers anticipate problems more? Is this a good thing? How do we find the right balance – prepare but don't obsess?

In this section of the sermon Todd talked about why people are late for church. Is it because they don't expect problems or are there other reasons? Does it show a lack of respect when someone doesn't arrive on time (for a dinner date or a service?). What about arriving early?

3. BUILD SPACE IN MY SCHEDULE

Focuses on Ecclesiastes 10:15

How 'scheduled' is your life? Do you rely on a daytimer, calendar app, etc.? Should you?

Todd stated that life is a journey, not a race, that it's not how fast we go but how well we live. So we need to slow down, but what are some practical ways we can do that?

Could you find some space in your schedule to add margin? What will you do with it?

4. PRUNE MY ACTIVITIES PERIODICALLY

Focuses on 1 Corinthians 6:12

Todd asked us a very important question: "What have you stopped doing lately?" If your answer is 'nothing' is there something you should stop? Have you added activities without pruning others back?

How often do you ask yourself this question: 'What does God want me to do with my time, my energy, and my money?'

Do you recall the word that Todd said was the key to an effective life? SELECTION – discuss

Have you ever said no to things you like? Todd pointed out that we don't just prune dead branches but also those that may still produce fruit. Does this principle make sense?

5. DO LESS AND TRUST GOD MORE

Focuses on 2 Corinthians 1:8-9

Todd encouraged us to step back from all of our striving to attain our goals/dreams and to let God act. Is it time for you to do less in some area of your life?

Todd said that one good thing that can sometimes come from our being stressed and overloaded is that sometimes it will cause us to turn to God for help. Have you had a time (or times) when you reached the end of your rope and God came through for you?

Todd reminded us that busyness is not the way to move a mountain – we need faith in God who will move the mountain for us. What is the mountain you are facing in your life? How can you rely on God to move it for you? How can the group prayer for you?

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Living Simply: We value uncluttered lives, which free us to love boldly, give generously, and serve joyfully.

Job 3:26 I have no peace, no quietness. I have no rest; only trouble comes.

Benefits of Margin: Peace of mind

Better physical health

Stronger relationships

More available to God

STEPS TO BUILDING BREATHING ROOM IN YOUR LIFE:

1. ACCEPT MY HUMAN LIMITATION

Psalms 103:14 For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.

Job 14:5 You have decided the length of our lives. You know how many months we will live, and we are not given a minute longer.

Our limitations: Physical, Emotional, Mental, Time

2. EXPECT TO HAVE PROBLEMS

John 16:33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.

Proverbs 22:3 A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.

3. BUILD SPACE IN MY SCHEDULE

Ecclesiastes 10:15 Fools are so exhausted by a little work that they can't even find their way home.

4. PRUNE MY ACTIVITIES PERIODICALLY

1 Corinthians 6:12 You say, "I am allowed to do anything"—but not everything is good for you...

5. DO LESS AND TRUST GOD MORE

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 ... We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.